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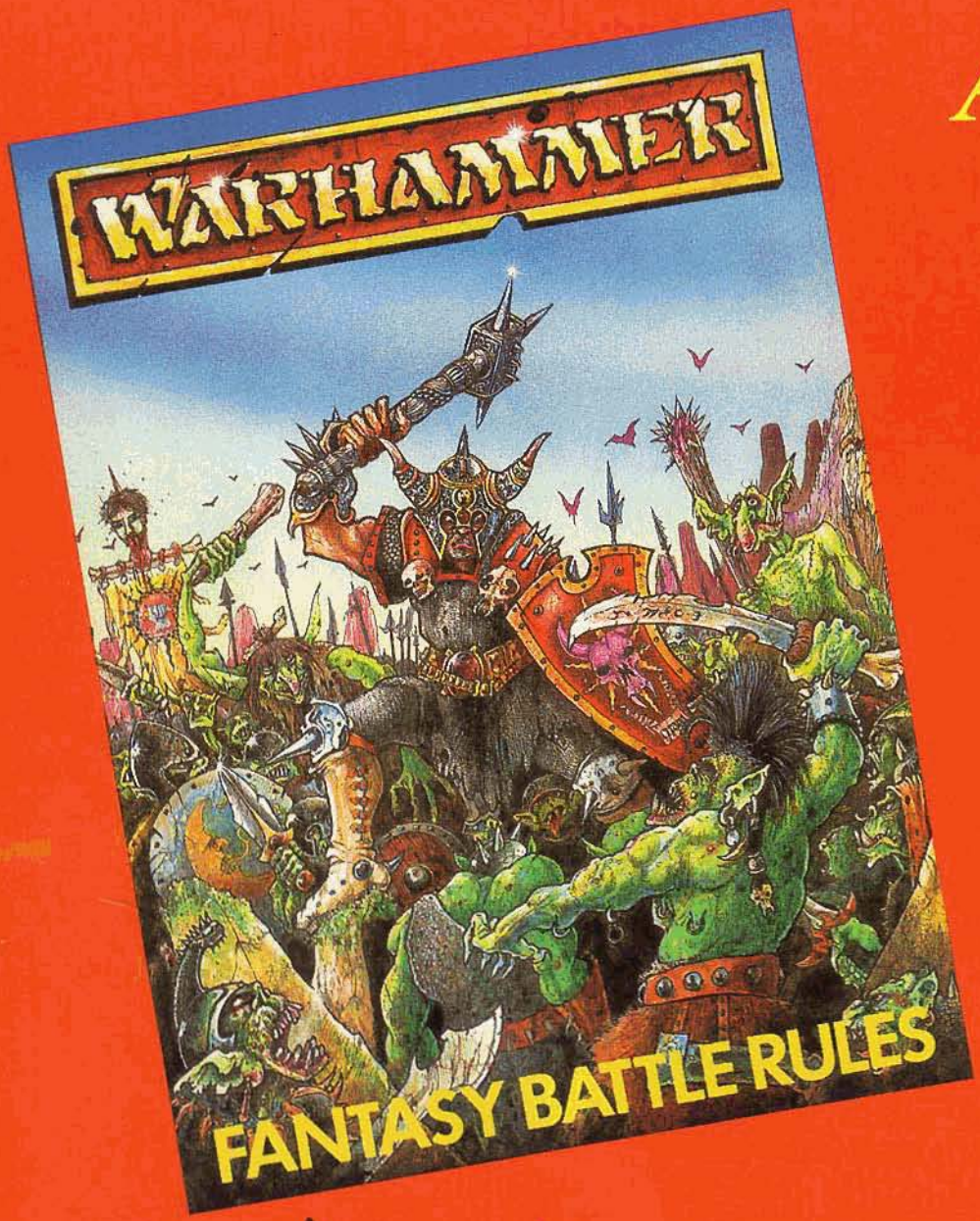

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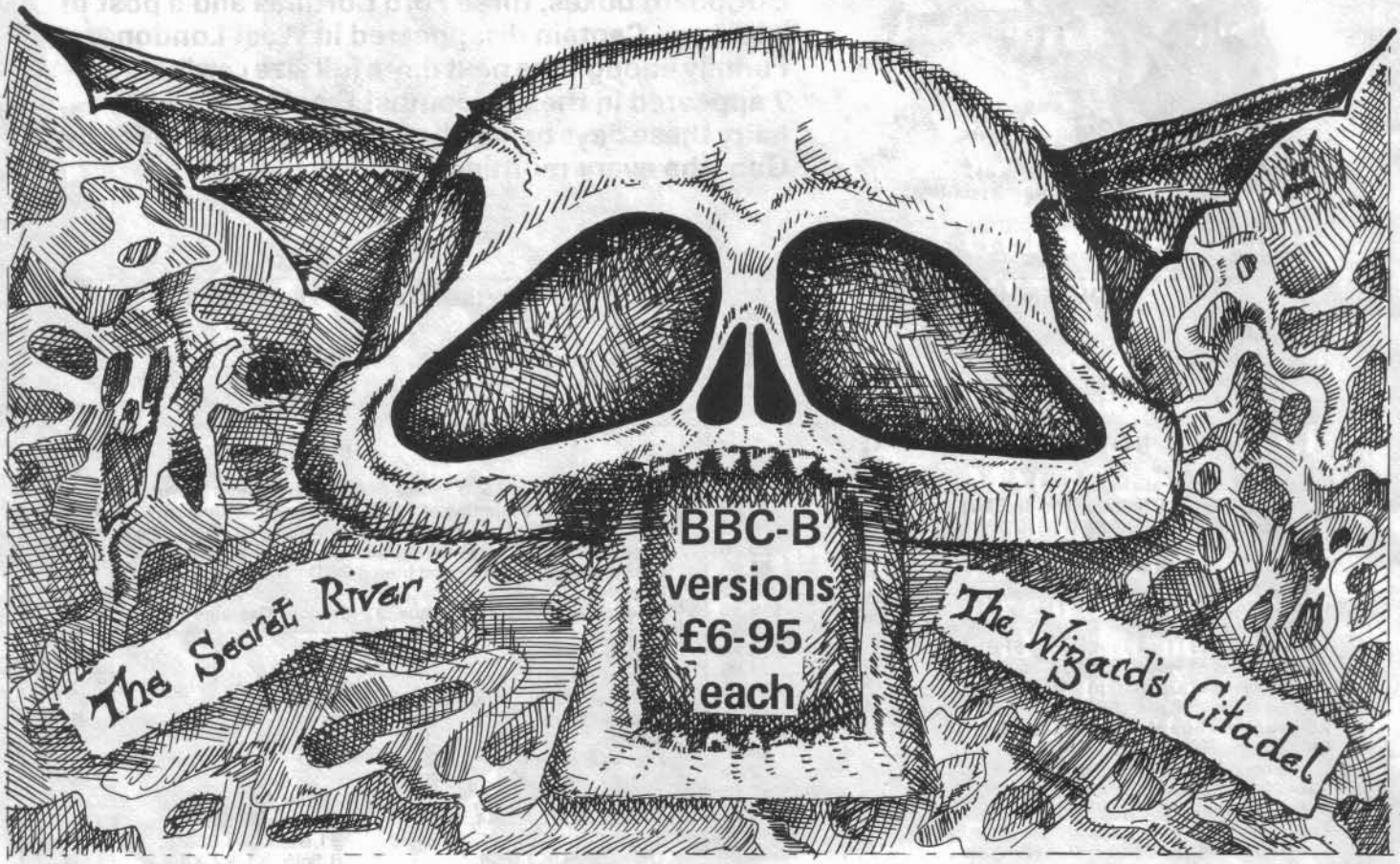

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PASTE-UP ARTIST: Shelagh Dwyer
COVER: Chris Achilleos
ILLUSTRATION: Bill Houston, John Mould, Nicholas Bibby, Trevor Hammond, Cathy Wood, Alan Hunter, Gary Ward
TYPESETTING: Anne Kiernan
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Dave Langford, Dave Morris, Albie Fiore, Marc Gascoigne, Gary Chalk, Joe Dever, Steve Jackson
ADVERTISING: Jon Sutherland
PUBLISHER: Games Workshop Ltd
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All correspondence should be addressed to *White Dwarf*, 27/29 Sunbeam Rd, London NW10 6JP.

At the time of writing, I am just preparing for a trip to Dallas. No, JR is not interested in being interviewed in *White Dwarf*. The Hobby Industry of America's annual show is there this year, and all the 1985 releases from the games and miniatures companies will be on show.

Will the new year bring any new concepts in role-playing? Will the trend continue towards making role-playing games based on well-known characters? Following the trend of the games companies, the miniaturescompanies are now making licensed ranges of character figures. For example, *Lord of the Rings* figures are to be made by Grenadier in the USA and by Citadel in the UK. There is also a strong rumour that a major miniatures company will be given the license to manufacture official *D&D* figures now that *TSR* have decided to stop manufacturing white metal miniatures. Who will the lucky company be? Find out next issue after the show.

Ian Livingstone

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Contributions: The editor will be pleased to consider any previously unpublished articles or artwork for inclusion in *White Dwarf*. Contributions should be typed, double-spaced on one side of the paper only

A Place of Damp

Adventuring in the Depths

This article is intended as a background piece for any city adventure, rather than an adventure in itself. The environment it details could easily be integrated into any campaign.

Beneath the cobbled streets of the city a thousand drains and pipes filter into the great tunnels and basins of the sewers. Rain and wastewater mix in muddy underground rivers, nourishing the moulds and fungi that line the rough-hewn walls.

But moulds and fungi are not the only life in the dark realm of the sewers. Here and there, stairs lead up from stone wharves, and bright lanterns cast rippling shadows on the fetid waters.

From these wharves and their underground harbour, the sewer bargees (or sewer rats, as they are sometimes called) ply their trade - the secret transportation of goods and/or people beneath the city.

Tunnels big enough for the barges extend for miles beneath the city, and out to many surface waterways, the bargees guiding their craft through the complex locks that will take them into sunlight.

But the bargees are not the only inhabitants of the sewers - many foul creatures lurk in the scum covered backwaters and channels. Ambush is a constant risk, and customers for the bargees keep a tight grip on their maps and think only of travelling the right paths.

Physical Layout of the Sewers

The first fifty to a hundred feet below the streets is occupied by:

1. Sewers. Tunnels taking waste down. A maximum of 2 feet in diameter, most sewers are almost vertical. Entry to a sewer is via garderobes, cess pits etc.

2. Stormwater Drains. Tunnels draining away rainwater. A maximum of of 3 feet in diameter, stormwater drains are vertical or up to 40 degrees from the vertical. These drains may be entered via surface drains, and entry points are usually heavily grilled to prevent venomous and plain nasty creatures from entering the city via the sewers.

3. Access Tunnels. Originally built for inspection of the sewerage system, access tunnels are almost exclusively used by the bargees and their customers; 65% of all access tunnels lead to bargee wharves. These tunnels are 6 feet in diameter, and never at an angle greater than 45 degrees from vertical. Entry to access tunnels is via manholes, which are usually found in back streets, or the cellars of some city buildings such as the Guildhall. Access tunnels leading to wharves end at a locked and barred oaken door. There will also be a bellrope, connected to the nearest bargee harbour or waystation. (If rung, bargees arrive within 1-6 hours).

The general odour and appearance of the sewers is digusting; stormwater drains are less odorous, but the access tunnels are similar to the sewers, since there is no fresh rainwater to keep them clean.

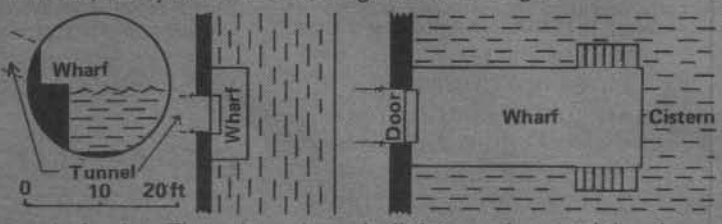
After the first fifty to hundred feet, the sewers and stormwater drains feed into:

1. Channels. Tunnels thirty to forty feet in diameter, where the rainwater and sewage mix. Normally, these have only five to fifteen feet of 'water' in them, making the channels excellent waterways for the bargees' narrowboats.

2. Cisterns. Large chambers designed to hold large amounts of stormwater, and avoid the sewerage system flooding the city. The cisterns are square in shape, 300 feet to each side, with a fifty foot high ceiling. The water level in them is generally only three or four feet.

The largest cistern is used as a harbour by the bargees - it is double the size of the normal cisterns, save for the ceiling which is still only fifty feet high. Bargees alter the channels and sewers around this cistern so that only rainwater feeds into their harbour, making it a relatively clean and pleasant place.

3. Wharves. There are many varieties of bargee wharves, differing in shape, size, and modes of construction. The simplest are merely ledges projecting two or three feet out from the side of a channel, with the door behind the ledge leading to an access tunnel. Other wharves may project thirty feet into a cistern, complete with loading steps, block and tackle, ready to handle the largest secret cargo.



4. Locks. These have been built into and around the channels to avoid waterfalls or to climb to a higher level. Basically they are the same as locks in canals - there are two gates and a gate or pumping mechanism to raise or lower the water between the gates.

The Bargees

Bargees are a sombre breed of humanity, dour in behaviour and appearance. They live a stealthy, hidden life, and this tends to be reflected in their personalities.

Bargees live almost entirely in their narrowboats, always in slightly damp conditions. Whilst they use lanterns and torches, they dislike the harsh light of the sun, or of a magical spell. Consequently, they see well in low light, though not in total darkness. Often, their hair and skin is slightly green, and it is a mark of status to have algae or fungus actually on some part of the body. All bargees are excellent swimmers, and can navigate the sewers with ease.

Many bargees also prowl the city streets as thieves, though they tend only to work at night or on overcast days. In any case, bargees are always on good terms with the Thieves Guild, since thieves are their more regular customers - using the bargees to ferry both goods and guild members to and from their illegal missions.

Bargees are naturally immune to plague, scurvy and rickets, and have a high resistance to all disease. Cholera affects them slightly, but only as an equivalent to the common cold.

Narrowboats

The bargee narrowboat is both a home and business. The narrowboat pulls the barges which are typically loaded with smuggled goods or passengers.

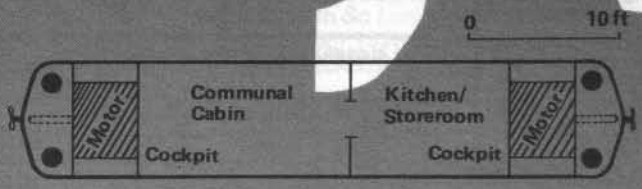
A typical narrowboat is forty feet long, seven feet wide, six feet high, and draws two and a half feet of water. It can be steered from either end, the tillers being made detachable from whatever happens to be the bow at the time.

and Darkness

of Cities by Garth Nix

Similarly, the narrowboat can be propelled from either end. Propulsion is by screw (or propeller), which is turned by the clockwork (or, very rarely, magical) engine in the boat. Clockwork engines are family heirlooms, as their construction is both expensive, time-consuming and a bargee secret. The vast springs in the narrowboats are normally only rewound six time a year, each time being marked marked by a bargee festival - the Coiling of Yule, Midsummer and at the beginning of each season. For most of the clockwork engines this is sufficient, but for those unlucky families that have weak engines additional coilings may be allowed by the Harbour Council - otherwise they have to revert to poles.

A narrowboat usually houses a family of six to eight, with two parents, two to three older children (13 or above), two to three younger children, and perhaps a baby. At the harbour, grandparents would also be found aboard the narrowboats. They normally live in tunnels about the harbour, but live onboard when their folk are at anchor.



Barges
Barges are simply long, narrow-based boats, with no decking or cabin, (though they often have a canvas cover) towed behind narrowboats. Each narrowboat can tow up to 4 barges at a constant speed of 2-3 miles per hour (a gentle walking speed).

Cargoes
These include anything the referee can think of that might require hidden transportation. Some suggestions are:

Liquor.	Kegs of brandy, whisky or liqueurs. Bottles of wine.
Spices.	Peppercorns, ginger, cinnamon, anise, garlic.
Tobacco.	Smoked leaf or cakes of chewing tobacco.
Ale.	Kegs or barrels of foamy dark ale.
Cloth.	Silks, fine linens, cloth-of-gold.
Foodstuffs.	Jams, confectionery, preserved foods, smoked venison.
Thieves.	Being transported to or from a job.
Escapees.	Fugitives from justice, adventurers fleeing enemies.
Magic.	Items that must not see the light of day, forbidden instruments, arcane librams outlawed by the city.

Other Inhabitants
The sewers are a favourite place for creatures that shun the light and human order. In the waters, they prey on bargees and lesser creatures, or stalk drier tunnels in search of other prey.

Suitable *AD&D* creatures for the sewers include: rats; giant rats; scum creepers; shambling mounds; spiders, giant; spiders, large; spiders, water; toad, giant; trolls; greenhag; muckdwellers; snake, giant, poisonous; crocodile, normal; black pudding; brown mould; yellow mould algoid; bloodworm, giant; weed eels; green slime; lizard, subterranean; lizard men and rot grubs.

All these monsters (and more) might be found somewhere in the sewers, or perhaps in natural tunnels that connect with the sewers.

Events
The referee may choose to have any of the following events in an adventure based on the sewers.

Flash Flood. Rain in catchment areas produces a sudden flooding of the channels and cisterns. Water level rises by 2-20 feet in 2-12 minutes.

Waterfall. The channel drops to a lower channel of cistern, without a lock. Waterfalls may be gradual (and thus navigable), or sheer drops.

Whirlpool. Where several channels feed into a cistern, which itself drains into a vertical shaft, a whirlpool is created. Adventurers will notice the current's speed increasing up to 100 yards away, and hear the whirlpool's roar.

Sunken Treasure. A chest, barrel or container is dimly per perceived beneath the water. The chest may be real, an illusion, a trap, etc.

Corpses. a number of half-sunken corpses. If touched without protection there is a 40% chance of contracting a chronic, severe disease of the blood.

Scenario Outlines

1. The players are hired by a merchant to guard a shipment of fine porcelain. He does not wish to pay duty, so has arranged to send it via the sewers. The players must guard the porcelain from attacks, prevent it being broken (despite waterfalls, sinking, attacks, flash floods etc) and eventually meet the merchant on the surface. The players' transporting bargees might be killed early in the adventure, leaving the adventurers lost in the sewers, charged with the delivery of 22 exquisite vases and four complete tea services . . .

2. A reward is posted for the recovery of a magical item, stolen from the strong-room of an important wizard. By his divination, he has discovered that the thieves fled the city via the sewers, and indeed, might still be lurking somewhere down there. The adventurers must trace their movement, question and bribe bargees, and search the fetid channels of the city sewers for their quarry.

3. Bad times have come upon the city, creatures swarming up from the depths to assault the good citizens. The city council is powerless to stop the monsters - their watchmen are ambushed in the dark waterways, and now they refuse to go down to do combat. At last, the council remembers the bargees, and sends word to gain their help - but the bargees refuse to aid the council that has never aided them in the slightest. A compromise is reached, however, and the bargees agree to provide guides for any parties the council sends down. One such party is sent, charged with discovering the source of the monstrous invasion.

These are examples of scenarios that would involve the sewers, the underworld, where vice and illegality go hand in hand with disease and loathsome creatures. Most city adventurers ignore the 'delights' of the sewers, or treat them as just another dungeon, when everyone can see there is one basic difference - adventurers don't need rubber waders in an ordinary dungeon! □

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Critical Mass *is a regular fantasy and science fiction book review column by Dave Langford, another member of . . .*

Sequels Anonymous

Sometimes the strain becomes too much for ashen-faced, trembling SF authors. The terrible *craving* seizes them; only the strongest try to resist, and stumble sweating to phone the 24-hour hotline. 'Sequels Anonymous? For God's sake talk me out of this - my will-power's gone, I can feel a sixth *Dune* book coming over me . . .' Alas, the SA counsellors are rarely persuasive enough - and the trouble with sequelholism is that it damages not only writers' brains but readers'.

There are sequels and sequels, as shown by the first three books now moving down the conveyor belt towards *Critical Mass's* rotating knives. Douglas Adams is the gravest case, with *So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish* [*Pan* 191pp £6.95] - 'fourth book in the *Hitch-Hiker* trilogy'.

They say Adams finds it increasingly hard to write Hitcher books; you can see why. Book one was a small miracle, frothy jokes balancing pessimism in a tightrope-dance that needed no actual plot. Book two: similar but diluted. Book three had a plot, showing Adams to be hopeless at plots. Book four, even at a skimpy 45,000 words, is full of padding. 'It's guff. It doesn't advance the action'. [p131] A few good jokes and clever ideas, a shaggy-dog punchline as God's Final Message to His Creation is revealed - that's it. Sequelholism has drained Adams of his high-speed inventiveness which made him famous. No doubt he'll agree with me all the way to the bank.

Anne McCaffrey has unexpectedly published a sequel to what even rabid fans agree is her worst book, *Dinsosaur Planet* (1978). Billed as part one of a trilogy, *DP* was devoid of interest and passed straight into merciful oblivion. *The Survivors: Dinosaur Planet II* [*Orbit* 283pp £1.95] wraps up the story without visible need for a third volume, but remains half-hearted and dull.

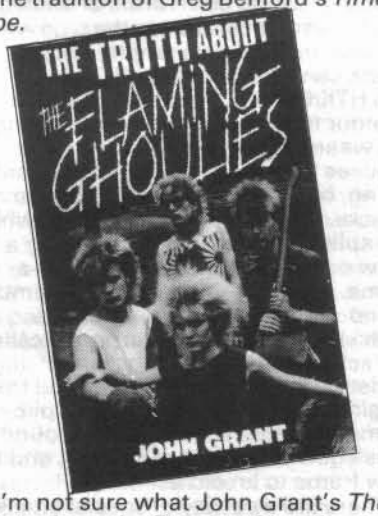
The problem: this is 'straight' SF adventure and McCaffrey never seems interested in it, as she is in her romantic SF/fantasies with their dragons and singers. The writing's slipshod and the science dodgy. Portentous questions about murky plot points (what happened to the missing spaceship, etc) are repeated ad nauseam - they not only lack narrative interest but prove to have singularly banal answers. I'd spent most of the book hoping that the question of why this planet has Earth-type dinosaurs was not going to be answered with traditional guff about ancient aliens who like zoos . . .

Our third 'sequel' is the best. The Adams novel should probably have stayed unwritten, and the McCaffrey boiled down with its predecessor into one tight story; but I like a preplanned, episodic fantasy series when it's done right, as in Geraldine Harris's *The Dead Kingdom* [*Unicorn* 182pp £2.50] - book 3 of her 'Seven Citadels' tetralogy. Several issues ago I emitted lukewarm praise for book 2, *Children of the Wind*, only to be told by One Who Knew that it was the weakest of the four. Pausing to acquire book 1, *Prince of the Godborn*, I zipped through the lot . . . yes, good stuff. Book 3 has quirky humour, high-fantasy passages almost on a par with Le Guin, and some heartening surprises. It's refreshing for any jaded reviewer or reader when characters fail to act stereotyped, fail to do what one yawningly assumes they must.

Harris's other secret is simple: evidently she planned the four books as a whole rather than writing blindly into the unknown or tacking extensions onto a self-contained novel. To all sequelholics I say, go thou and do likewise.

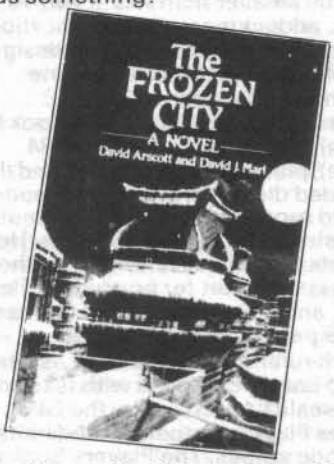
Your reviewer is also a sucker for hard-SF novels tackling the complexities of how science is really done. The *Critical Mass* seal of approval goes to Paul Preuss's *Broken Symmetries* [*Penguin* 335pp £2.95]. In near-future Hawaii, scientific and political infighting surround the ultra-powerful US/Japanese TERAC accelerator and its production of 'I particles' . . . stable quarks with awesome potential. Jaw-breaking jargon is kept to a couple of pages. Manipulation is the name of the game, both political and personal: Preuss will scare you rigid with his convincing picture of mostly well-meaning people and bureaucrats colliding (like particles in TERAC) and chain-reacting towards disaster.

Broken Symmetries has its flaws - like a spy-novel cliché or two - but it's an impressive and unnerving performance. In the tradition of Greg Benford's *Timescape*.



I'm not sure what John Grant's *The Truth about the Flaming Ghoulies* [*Muller* 244pp £8.95] is in the tradition of . . . but since it's dedicated to my wife and me, you'll understand the possibility of bribery and corruption. The Flaming Ghoulies are a chart-topping group of the late 1980's who establish the book as SF (and incidentally cause mild alarm) when a final performance features their detonation in a multimegaton blast which razes Chicago. The writing of the Ghoulies' official history is turned over to a crack geomorphologist (since he knows all about rock), who trace their career through a maze of extremely silly letters and clippings making up the book.

Inevitably the ultimate revelation is a shaggy-dog joke, but there are plenty of laughs en route. Particularly implausible is Grant's libellous future slang . . . To pick printable examples, 1988 people don't say 'he threw up' but 'he heseltined everywhere'; they refer not to rude diseases but to 'some exotic variety of the reagan.' Is the author trying to tell us something?



The Frozen City [*Unwin* 231pp £8.95] comes from new authors David Arscott and David J Marl. It's a curious and interesting book, accessible to younger readers but using the fantasy city as a frame for political allegory. The city's 'frozen' under a cruel regime; movement is restricted by mazelike streets; art and beauty are exiled to a secret, buried city which is a literal underground; the young hero is beset with problems of honesty vs practical politics (sometimes too didactically expressed); the revelation of the regime's leadership has a philosophical brutality echoing Orwell's 'The object of power is power'.

Not particularly new or astonishing in itself, this gains freshness and force from the allegorical presentation. A modest success. Fantasy's so hidebound that it's still a novelty for authors to suggest that even a benign dicatorship, or monarchy, may not be a good thing.

Hello? Sequels Anonymous? I've this terrible urge to continue my comments on the Shards *Stainless Steel Rat Saves the World* adventure [*Mosaic*, for CBM64, £9.95] . . . argh, too late to stop. Seems my investigators last issue failed to be sufficiently obvious and simple-minded. Having passed the game's initial barrier, they say it gets slightly better - but recommend Harry Harrison's original books, especially the first, as being a lot more fun. Ned Ludd lives!

Next month - can Langford resist another sequel to the *Critical Mass* series? Will the SA hotline be able to talk me out of my viscious habit? I doubt it somehow . . . □

OPEN BOX

GOLDEN HEROES
Games Workshop **£8.95**

I usually test and review games from a position of relative ignorance, seeing them for the first time when they land on my doorstep. *Golden Heroes* is different. I first saw it as an amateur production in 1981 by Simon Burley and Peter Hains, predating almost all other superhero RPGs. Even in its early form it stood head and shoulders above other super games, incorporating ideas on campaign development and the characters' role in society which have been paralleled in later games, but never bettered. Unfortunately the earlier version suffered from poor distribution, and the game languished in obscurity until this reissue. The new version expands it from 60 A5 pages to 140 quarto pages (slightly smaller than A4) in two volumes, adding many rule clarifications, expansions, and examples of design and play, and incorporates some extremely good art.

The box contains a Players Book (56 pages) and Supervisors Book (84 pages), plus two twenty-sided and three six-sided dice. The box is deep enough to hold most of the normal paper and rubbish carried by RPG referees. However, its usefulness is limited by the fact that it is too short for normal A4 file paper and photocopies, and too narrow for US paper sizes.

Both rulebooks are printed as pseudo comic books, complete with fake comic code seals ('Approved by the GW Games Players Authority') and imitation bar code stripes. The Players Book concentrates on character generation, powers, and combat, with many detailed examples, and also gives an idea of campaign play. The Supervisors Book adds refinements and additional information for all parts of the rules, but puts a special emphasis on campaigns. Incidentally, this game calls the referee the Script Supervisor or SS, not the happiest abbreviation on record.

Character generation is based on four characterisitics and 5 to 10 randomly selected powers. However, the player may give up one or more potential powers to give the character especially advantageous backgrounds. As powers are rolled the player chooses whether to keep them at a minimal grade or improve them by spending more powers. For example, a player could roll eight potential powers, put one aside for an advantageous background, then use the next two rolls to gain and upgrade a power. Magic and Psionics initially cost two power rolls; if the player only has one power roll left, the power is unavailable. Finally, the player must design a background history and power rationale which explains all the details of the character. The referee examines this description, and throws out or modifies powers which are incompatible. The Players Book gives a detailed example of the generation and background history of one chairacter, plus four pages describing seven very different characters based on the same group of powers. When the referee is satisfied, the player can note the powers and make any changes in initial or figured characteristics. Usually the generation system

works well, though I found that approximately one character in ten had a combination of totally incompatible powers which just wasn't interesting or convincing. An optional system lets players choose powers, which may be more suitable for experienced gamers.

Golden Heroes uses a moderately simple combat system, based on rolls to hit, modified by the 'weapon class' of the victim. Attacks cause hits to kill (HTK) or hits to coma (HTC) damage. Most super characters have at least 25-30 HTC and HTK, some have much more. Usually attacks must do both forms of damage, and the user must choose the type which predominates. For example, a 10d6 attack can be split as 6d6 HTK/4d6 HTC, 5d6 HTK/5d6 HTC, or 4d6 HTK/6d6 HTC. Armour lowers defence class, making the wearer more difficult to hit, and reduces the amount of damage penetrating, but makes it harder to dodge attacks. Combat occurs in rounds which are split into four 'frames'. Striking a blow or a simple movement costs a frame, power use or a complex combat manoeuvre (such as a martial arts attack) costs two frames, a period called an 'action'. This is the most confusing variation between these rules and the original *Golden Heroes*, which split frames into four actions. A new round is thus equivalent to an old frame, and the new frame to an old action.

There are a variety of special attacks, from grappling and other holds to magic and psionics. These are handled as attacks against one or another characteristic. Weapons only receive cursory treatment, on the assumption that most heroes and villains are above using such plebeian tools. However, I'm told that a supplement will cover many types of weapon in some detail. Combat is roughly twice as fast as *Champions* or *Superworld*, and involves far fewer complications. Rules lawyers will hate the system, since there are very few ambiguous areas.

As already stated, the game is heavily orientated towards campaign play. The only way of improving powers or skills is by campaign development, which requires some record keeping by the player and referee. Actions such as intensive use of detective methods, patrolling the streets, and spending spare time in training and research are likely to lead to some advancement, but success is the best road to improvement. The character sheet records 15 possible improvement factors, from public relations to conscience. In some cases actions which boost one area will harm another. *Crossfire*, the 17-page scenario in the Supervisors Book, is designed to launch a campaign, introducing the players to three alien races and a powerful international agency. It contains several superheroes, a damsel in distress, and many chances to be heroic or stupid. I was lucky enough to play in this scenario before receiving the review copy, and can honestly say that it is a memorable (and possibly terminal) experience.

As a late contender in the super RPG field, *Golden Heroes* faces severe opposition from established games. However, its quality, scope, and the fact that is is orientated towards British players are bound to make it successful, if there is a steady flow of supplements and scenarios. There are a few minor flaws, but far fewer than in the first release of *Champions* or *Superworld*. I know that several of my friends have already bought the game, and look forward to experiencing some memorable adventures.

Presentation:	**10**	**Playability:**	**10**
Enjoyment:	**10**	**Skill:**	**8**
Complexity:	**7**	**Value for Money:**	**10**
Overall:	**10**	**Marcus L Rowland**	

MARVEL SUPERHEROES RPG

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This new game joins the current boom in Superhero RPGs, bearing the names of two mighty empires - *Marvel* and *TSR*. It features simple combat and power rules, good reasons for superheroes to spend time in their secret identities, and artwork based on the original comics.

The box holds a 16-page Battle Book, 48-page Campaign Book, 16-page adventure, eight cut-out character records for the Fantastic Four and four other supoerheroes, a double-sided map sheet, 25 counters representing characters, vehicles, and police, two ten-sided dice, and a wax crayon.

The Battle Book covers the basic rules of the game (characteristics, and how to perform feats anid fight), while the Cam-

paign Book deals with character generation, the nature and use of powers, equipment design and use, and how to run campaigns. Most of the combat rules are in the Battle Book, which is primarily intended as a simplified introduction to the game.

There are 7 main characteristics (Fighting, Agility, Strength, Endurance, Reason, Intuition, and Psyche) plus four variables (Health [hit points], Karma, Resources [money etc], and Popularity, which alter as the game progresses. The value of each characteristic is rated on a scale of 11 grades ranging from Feeble (subhuman) through Good and Amazing to Class 1000 (incomprehensibly powerful, and unattainable by players). The Campaign Book gives several examples for each characteristic and rank. For example, Professor X has Feeble strength, while the Mighty Thor's strength is Unearthly. Powers and skills are rated on the same scale, and their use is regulated by a single percentile dice roll table, which is repeated on the back cover of both game books. Dice rolls can be altered by expending Karma, which is recovered by performing good deeds, fulfulling obligations, and generally living up to the superhero code. However, Karma can be lost by misdeeds, crimes, and other mistakes. The ultimate error for a hero is the death of an opponent or bystander, forfeiting all Karma. Super-villains, of course, earn Karma by committing crimes, but can lose it for similar reasons. Super-villains who kill innocent bystanders or superheroes forfeit 30 Karma points, but those who manage to defeat and humiliate opponents reap rich rewards. Super-villains can eliminate NPC underlings and henchmen without penalty, however, since that's just good worker management relations. Both superheroes and villains gain Karmas by being confident and a peace with themselves and their fellows, and use of a secret identity offers a good route to such inner tranquility.

The Campaign Book suggests two methods for character generation - a purely random system, and a free-choice system in which the player selects characteristic levels, powers and skills, then submits them to the referee for approval and modification to appropriate levels for the campaign or scenario. Both methods are fast, easy, and work well, although the free-choice system will probably cause a few arguments. As the game progresses Karma points may be saved in 'pools' to buy or improve characteristics and powers. However, the points must be allocated to a specific purpose before they are saved, and bad Karma losses can wipe out accumulated pools before they can be spent. New powers cost 3200 to 18000 Karma points (and must be justified in the context of the campaign), improvements can cost up to 15000 points. Incidentally, the character record sheet in the campaign book doesn't have any spaces for recording such pools - an annoying omission which should be remedied.

The scenario, Day of the Octopus, pits Captain America, Spider-Man, Captain Marvel, and the Thing against several supervillains led by Doctor Octopus. There are six chapters, each consisting of campaign developments and a description of the setting, characters, and weapons involved in any combat. Most require the use of the large map in the game box.

The other game components are aids to the players or referee. The character records cover the Fantastic Four, Spiderman (the 'host' who explains most of the rules), Wolverine, Captain Marvel, and Captain America. Each card has a colour picture of the character on the glossy side, and personal and game details overleaf. The counters are large and marked with an arrow to indicate the location of the character or object they represent when placed on the game map. All the superhero and supervillain counters illustrate the characters secret ID on one side, and the super ID on the other. The map shows a few blocks of a generic city on one side, and interior details of a few buildings on the other. The city map seems to be in 5mm scale, the building maps are approximately 25mm scale. side, and the super ID on the other. The map shows a few blocks of a generic city on one side, and interior details of a few buildings on the other. The city map seems to be in 5mm scale, the building maps are approximately 25mm scale.

Overall, the game rules and mechanics are simple and work reasonably well. Experienced referees may find the rules a little simplistic (for example, characters don't get tired or lose points while using powers, unless they expend Karma), but they certainly reflect the slamming action in most comics. Combat is resolved quickly, and the rules encourage role-playing as well as heroics. The scenario is amusing, and does a good job of showing how the rules work. All the game components are well-printed, and the artwork varies from adequate to excellent.

My main reservations about this game are the way in which it has been restricted to the *Marvel* universe. The *Marvel* trademark appears several times on most pages, and there are frequent warnings about violation of copyright. It's extremely unlikely that there will ever be any 'official' scenarios featuring non-*Marvel* characters; in fact, *TSR* are rumoured to have been forced to withdraw one magazine adventure which was designed for several game systems, and included *Marvel* stats for non-*Marvel* characters. It's easy to convert superheroes and scenarios from other systems to thjese rules, so referees who don't mind some effort can still use scenarios iintended for other games.

All in all, a useful system which is suitable for beginning players and referees, but should still suit experienced gamers.

All three scenarios have 16 pages, and are packed with a cover folder containing character details and a double-sided 22"x17" map.

The Breeder Bombs pits the X-men against Magneto and other super-villains in the X-men's headquarters, and sites in the USA, USSR, Australia, and Chile. Seven chapters lead the characters through a search to destroy four 'breeder' bombs, 'dirty' nuclear weapons designed to increase radiation levels and cause millions of mutations. There are several tricks and twists, which lead to an amusing and apocalyptic conclusion.

In the *Time Trap* six of the Avengers fight Kang, a time-travelling super-villain who wants to trick them into destroying their own past. Three of seven chapters are encounters designed to weaken the Averngers'position in the present, by making it less likely that the Avengers will be formed or survive the stormy events of the group's early history. The remainder are encounters with Kang and attempts to thwart his plans. Players and referees with extensive knowledge of the Avengers' history will have a considerable advantage in this adventure.

Murderworld involves the Fantastic Four with the super-villain Arcade, who attempts to lure them out of their headquarters and into various traps. Meanwhile, two super-villain groups enter the Baxter Building and fight, turning on the Fantastic Four when they return. Other subplots lead to a final confrontation in another dimension. The scenario is designed for the current Fantastic Four, with the She-Hulk replacing the Thing, but includes the Thing's statistics for his fans.

All three adventures work reasonably well, but stress combat above role-play or campaign development. None give any opportunity for the characters to use their secret identities (an important feature of the game rules), all are extremely violent.

The *Judges Screen* is a fairly standard triple cardboard sheet. The referee's side has a representative selection of tables, including the 'universal' table which is used to resolve most actions. The player's side shows the same 'universal' table, and a map of the *Marvel* version of Manhatten. There is also an eight-page booklet to accompany the map, describing the city and giving rough details of major criminal power blocs and SHIELD. This pack doesn't add much to the game (the 'universal' table appears twice on the covers of the original rule books, for example), and will probably only appeal to completists.

Avengers Assembled is a 32-page book, with a loose cover containing a detailed map of the Avengers' mansion. The text gives details of the mansion, SHIELD, and Nick Fury, 30 superheroes (although two characters have multiple secret identities, and there are really only 26 separate heroes), two associates of the Avengers, and 22 of their enemies. Each character is illustrated, and there are also pictures of some SHIELD equipment and personnel. This is an invalu able reference for any MSH referee, and may appeal to many comic collectors and fans.

These products show a uniformly high standard of presentation, and are suit able for the roles they fill. Hopefully future productions will be equally enjoyable.

Marvel Superheroes

Presentation:	**8**	**Enjoyment:**	**8**
Playability:	**9**	**Complexity:**	**5**
Skill:	**5**	**Rules:**	**7**
Overall:	**8**		

MH The Breeder Bombs	**Overall:7**
MH 2 Time Trap	**Overall:6**
MH 3 Murderworld	**Overall:6**
MH AC 1 Judges Screen	**Overall:4**
MH AC 2 Avengers Assembled	**Overall:8**

Marcus L Rowland

RuneRites *is a regular column for* RuneQuest *players, edited by Dave Morris.*

STRUCK BY LIGHTNING

by Dave Morris and Robert Dale

Robert's previous selection of Celtic mythos Rune Spells [WD53] *proved so popular that this month we have some more from his campaign - along with a few of my own devising. I have not said which spells are mine and which are Robert's, because we are holding the first* RuneRites *competition! The first person to write correctly distinguishing my spells from Robert's will win a copy of* SoloQuest 1. *Okay, so it's not a* big *competition . . . -DM*

THE BREATH OF LLYR

Range:	160m	Non-stackable
Duration:	15 minutes	Reuseable
Cost:	2 POW	

This spell raises a dense mist which reduces visibility to only two metres. The volume of effect may be approximated as a disc 25m across and 5m high. Strange shapes are to be glimpsed through the mist, and these may lure a character from his path, cause him to unleash an arrow or spell in alarm, etc. The mist can either be conjured to appear at a particular spot remaining there until it disperses or is dispelled - or it can be cast upon an individual. In the former case, it provides ideal cover for a retreat. In the latter, the target's POW must be overcome in the usual way. The mist will then centre itself upon him and follow his movements (which are apt to become somewhat random). Note that a fierce gale, such as that provided by a sylph, is ineffective in dispersing the *breath of Llyr; dispel magic 4* is required.

BALOR'S EYE

Range:	(self)	Non-stackable
Duration:	15 minutes	Reuseable
Cost:	2 POW	

The caster of this spell is touched by the spirit of the Fomori lord, Balor. His left eye shines with a baleful blue-white glare. Anyone meleeing the character must make a luck roll each round to avoid meeting the awful gaze of this eye. If the luck roll fails then the victim is subject to a *fearshock* attack (*ie the spellcaster's POW is matched against the victim's CON; see rules for Darkness elementals - DM*).

Balor's eye has some disadvantages to the caster. First, he temporarily loses his sight in the affected eye. Deprived of binocular vision, he subtracts 10% from Attack in melee, 25% from Parry and 10% from Defence (if any); Attack chances with missile weapons are halved. For each victim *slain* as a result of the *fearshock,* the caster must sacrifice 2d6 points of battle magic POW to Balor immediately. Each time this spell is used, there is a 1% chance that the caster will acquire a Chaotic (20%) or a Reverse Chaos (80%) feature.

THE KEY OF ANNWN

Range:	160m	Non-stackable
Duration:	15 minutes	Reuseable
Cost:	2 POW	

With this spell, the caster can gain control over a creature of the undead. Vampires, however, are immune. If the caster overcomes the POW of the undead being then it becomes his slave for the spell's duration. All orders will be obeyed - even a command for the creature to destroy itself. When the spell wears off (or is dispelled), the being loses all volition and reverts to a state of true death. *The key of Annwn* cannot be used in conjunction with *extension.*

THE CAULDRON OF ANNWN

Range:	touch	Non-stackable
Duration:	one hour to complete the spell	Reuseable
Cost:	3 POW	

This spell restores life and spirit to a character who died by wounds or poison. The body must be placed in pure spring water and sprinkled with dried apple blossom. Every five minutes for one hour, the caster expends 1 point of battle magic POW to sustain the ritual. If the spell is interrupted before completion, the ritual is abrogated and no second attempt can ever be made.

A character resurrected by this spell will arise exhausted and in need of rest, but with all his abilities fully restored. The spell will not, however, recall a character who has been dead for more than seven days. Those in the land of the dead quickly forget their past existence and after a certain time cannot be persuaded to take mortality upon themselves once again.

NUADA'S HAND

Range:	2m	Non-stackable
Duration:	15 minutes	Reuseable
Cost:	3 POW	

A shining silver hand wielding a magnificent longsword appears in the air besides the caster. It will continue to hover within 2m of him and fight his enemies until the spell expires. The hand Attacks and Parries at 90%, strikes for 1d8+5+1d6 and has a Defence of 35%. The hand and sword show no outward sign of damage when struck, but any blows upon them (count hand and blade as one entity) are rolled for as normal, and when a total of 40 hit points have been sustained *Nuada's hand* vanishes. It will also be banished by a *dispel magic 4,* of course. Other spells (including *bladesharp, invisibility, dullblade,* etc) have no effect on it.

FIMBÜLWINTER

Range:	5m	Non-stackable
Duration:	2 minutes	Reuseable
Cost:	1 POW	

This spell can be used in either of two ways - as an instantaneous attack, or as a passive enchantment of 10 MR duration. The attack mode of the spell projects a wave of intense cold towards the victim. The caster matches his POW against the victim's CON on the Resistance Table; if the attack is successful, the victim loses 2d6 from his CON. CON points lost in this way recover at the rate of 1 point per hour. The chance of a successful POW attack is reduced by 10% if the victim is wearing leather armour/padding or warm clothes, and by 5% for metal armour.

In its passive form, the spell encloses the caster in a 2m zone of icy coldness (*to which he, of course, is immune! - DM*). This can be detected by the appearance of frost on the ground, water vapour on the air as the caster breathes out, and so on. Anyone entering the zone is subject to a POW vs CON attack as detailed above, except that the damage to CON in this case is only 2 points. A character continues to be subject to this *'chillshock'* attack every round that he lingers in the zone. The projection value of lagging is negated after 2 MR.

KARACH

Range:	touch	Non-stackable
Duration:	instantaneous	Reuseable
Cost:	3 POW	

A souless duplicate of a person known to the caster can be created. Before half-life can be breathed into the Karach, a simulcarum of the individual in question must be fashioned using Illusion magic [see *RQ Companion - DM*]. This will require a *frame* spell, *motion* (and *harmonize*), 1 point of *sight* for every 3 SIZ and 1 point of *substance* for every 1 SIZ. *Sound* may optionally be used, though the Karach will only be able to snarl, hiss and produce other meaningless noises. After all this, the *karach* spell itself is cast onto the illusionary being. A real and permanent duplicate of the original is then created. This duplicate, the Karach, has the physical characteristics and Manipulation (including Combat), Perception and Stealth skills of the person it resembles. It has no volition, and will simply obey its creator's commands without question. Also, because it has no POW, it cannot use or be affected by magic.

To create a Karach, one must acquire some item often used or worn by the original - a sword, perhaps, or a favourite robe. A character can sacrifice for this spell only once in his life, for reasons divine rather than rational.□

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THE DARK USURPER

Part 2 of a Fighting Fantasy Solo Adventure by Jon Sutherland and Gareth Hill

In order to play this Fighting Fantasy *solo game, you will need to either know the rules or have access to a* Fighting Fantasy *game book. Also you require a pencil, rubber and two six-sided dice.*

INTRODUCTION
You are Corwin Calbraith, rightful heir to the Duchy of Skeln. You have returned home after three years fighting for the King, to find that Evald Senskell, your friend and regent, has been tricked by Barnak, the Dark Usurper, and now languishes in prison. You too were taken prisoner but managed to escape. The story begins again after your first night of freedom hidden in the forest near your castle. Now turn to **1**.

1: There is a silence - deep, solemn, silence - reigning in the depths of the forest. The sun shines in that full flood of glory that heralds the spring. Weary, hungry and cold you stretch slowly and deliberately, seemingly unaware of your regained freedom. Your horse, Aryl, has gone, lost in the night; you realise that you will probably never find him. Yesterday's events flood back into your mind: sooner or later Barnak's men will be combing the countryside for you. Will you head north, further into the forest, go to **81**, or will you head west and make for the road and the village beyond, turn to **88**.

2: The old man offers you a seat, and pours a glass of cider. Passing it to you, he begins to speak.
'I know of the creature Barnak, no doubt those creatures who treated me to their hospitality were in his pay. Fool that I am I fell asleep waiting for you. I knew that you would come, sooner or later.'
'How?' You interject.
'Stay your questions for a while, impetuous one', he replies. 'There is much I can teach you, Corwin, but sadly my strength is not what it was. I see that you have your father's blade, Stroma. I will trade you some of my skills for the green gem set in its pommel.'
Do you agree, go to **49**, or not, turn to **6**.

3: Two are armed with spears, one with a footman's mace.
1st Spearman: *Skill*:5; *Stamina*:4.
2nd Spearman: *Skill*:6; *Stamina*:3.
Maceman: *Skill*:7; *Stamina*:4.
If you win go to **27**, if you lose turn to **82**.

4: The village is deserted, its entire population gone; Jorkell explains their absence.
'Barnak took most of the people from here as slaves as part of his tribute. Some say that his soldiers favour human flesh. They're gone anyway, the few that escaped are now in Kari.'
The sight of a trooper galloping towards you stops Jorkell continuing. 'Sire, the enemy are to the north-east, they have cut our lines of retreat to Kari.' Turn to **61**.

5: Bored, you search the woods, go to **28**.

6: 'I understand your reluctance but let me explain. Once most people of power held stones such as these, they are a symbol and a key, unlocking the subsconscious and allowing the inner power to flow. I have such a stone but its power is gone; if I have yours I can help you.' Do you change your mind, go to **49**, or walk out, turn to **90**.

7: Striding along behind the cats you hear a muffled scream directly in front of you. The cats quicken their pace. The trees open out into a clearing where you can see three figures standing over a fourth. The creatures are goblins and they are prodding a crouching man with their spears. The cats stop at the the clearing and turn to face you. You understand they want you to help, go to **60**.

8: You decide to seek out the old man. Walking to the forest you recall his name . . . Asmund, that's it. Struggling through the undergrowth you desperately try to keep track of the direction, go to **19**.

9: As you pass the overthrown roadblock a scout rushes back, waving his hands wildly. His horse skids to a halt in front of you; half shouting he exclaims, 'The enemy is between us and Kari, they are moving faster now.' Turn to **61**.

10: The cats guide you swiftly to Asmund's but the place is deserted. Will you wait, go to **68**, or search the surrounding forest for him, go to **28**.

11: As the boar gets closer you shout, 'Attack!' Instantly the cats spring at the boar, one seizing it by the leg, the other by the throat. Squealing and kicking the beast tumbles over - in a second it lies dead on the ground. The cats tear busily at the creature's flesh. Stooping you take out your knife and cut a chunk of meat off for later, turn to **71**.

12: A multitude of lights fall on your hand, a warm tingling sensation makes you smile as you turn to Asmund who is nodding his approval. 'This shows the power of patience, you now have the gift of Asmund's Floating Spheres: cast them at a foe, and stand well back. You have only enough for two such attacks.' Turn to **93**.

13: As you cut the man free from his bonds, the two pumas re-emerge and sit ten yards away, watching. Turn to **25**.

14: Crossing the road all seems silent, the village appears to be deserted. Test your luck, if you succeed go to **21**, if you fail turn to **50**.

15: Sauntering up to the gate the four guards scrabble for their weapons. Dumbfounded they are seemingly powerless to act as you walk straight past them and into the town, the pumas following. Walking along the main street people stop and stare. Suddenly they burst into cheers and the crowd surges towards you. Do you address them , go to **59**, or search for Jorkell, turn to **72**.

16: Quickly Jorkell commands the men to form up into two lines, a tactic favoured by the King, you recall, the first line hits the enemy, then the second impacts breaking them up. As one the soldiers raise a cheer and hurtle towards the enemy at break-neck pace, go to **62**.

17: The scout reports little enemy activity, he is still expecting men back from nearer the castle. You thank him and go to see Jorkell, turn to **95**.

18: Jorkell shakes his head and says, 'As you command, sire.' He gestures to the men to make way for the creatures. The goblins step tentatively out into the sunlight; they barely get a few yards before the crowd has torn them to pieces. 'It is the way, sire, the people have long endured their tyranny. Death or freedom, our resolve will determine that.' You nod and follow him to his quarters. Turn to **91**.

19: The undergrowth is getting thicker, you swing Stroma back and forth to make progress. Tiredness and hunger begin to slow you down. A familiar face catches your attention, it is Asmund, go to **70**.

20: Stroma flashes in the light of morning, the creatures do not stir, simply looking at you unafraid and without malice. Instinctively you realise that they mean you no harm. Your warrior sense does not allow you to sheathe your sword. The creatures sit up and turn heading north-east. Do you follow them, turn to **7**, or ignore them and go your own way, **69**.

21: Your sixth-sense tells you that you are not alone. From nowhere a crossbow bolt slams into the ground by your foot and you dive instinctively for cover. A voice booms out, 'Surrender or we will cut you down, dog!' Do you surrender, turn to **75**, or remain hidden, go to **40**.

22: The two pumas begin chewing on the boar's corpse. Taking out a knife you stoop and cut a hunk of meat for later, turn to **71**.

23: The squadron divides into two; you lead the left, Jorkell the right, each of you has twenty-five troopers. Spurring the horses you swing out and around the enemy, turn to **44**.

24: The sentry turns as you creep up behind him, there is no other choice but to silence him yourself.
Sentry: *Skill*:5; *Stamina*:5.
If you win go to **67**, if you lose go to **82**.

25: 'What are you?' You demand.
'I am Asmund. It seems I am in your debt, Corwin.'
Do you wish to ask him how he knows your name, go to **64**. Do you wish to tell of your troubles, turn to **42**. Or do you ask him for sanctuary, go to **86**.

26: You enclose a faerie light with your fist, and tighten your grip; looking through your fingers you find it has gone. Do you try the same method again, go to **83**, or hold out your hand and concentrate, turn to **12**.

27: Stepping over the corpse, you see a man surrounded by bodies, wiping his axe on a dead man's tunic. Walking over to him, he greets you and says, 'Well fought. I am Berwin. These men once fought for Corwin, and now for Barnak.' He spits on the nearest corpse and looks at you with mad eyes. 'Who are you!' He demands.
'I am Corwin.' You reply.
'A damnable mess you've come home to; that fool Senskell let Barnak in so easily.'
'Senskell is a prisoner of Barnak. I will do what I must to save my people', you say confidently.
'One man is not enough - get yourself an army, then I'll fight for you. Farewell, Corwin.' With that he runs off. You decide that it would be safer now to head back to the forest, turn to **8**.

28: The thicket has been recently crushed to form a track, heading due east; you sense that Barnak must have captured Asmund. Cursing, you wish that you had taken Asmund with you. You mount your horse and ride back to Kari. Turn to **31**.

29: Riding westward along the road you could be forgiven for thinking that anything is wrong. As the Kari spur road meets the one leading to the castle the scouts rush back shouting 'Sire, there are creatures ahead, perhaps two hundred. They are moving slowly.' Jorkell turns to you for orders. Will you engage the enemy (you have fifty men with you), go to **61**, or will you head for the castle, go to **78**.

30: Producing the spheres you cast them at the uncoming boar. A huge detonation flashes on its head, the beast crashes to the floor, turn to **22**.

31: Kari is soon in sight, the pumas loping alongside your horse. As you enter the town, there is a feverish atmosphere in the air - people rushing about buildings defences, sharpening weapons and preparing for war. Do you ride straight for Jorkell, go to **95**, or find a scout to give you an update on the situation, turn to **17**.

32: Kicking the bodies over onto their backs is a grim business. Nevertheless you search the bodies: a handful of coins, and poor quality weapons is all you find. Will you head towards the village, go to **90**, or go deeper into the forest, **19**.

33: With the press of willing swords eager to slaughter the foe, you cannot even get a single blow in before it's all over. Jorkell holds aloft a head and says, 'Sire this will be our way, death or freedom, our swords will decide that.' You nod, and follow him to his quarters. Turn to **91**.

34: Pulling Stroma cleanly out of the scabbard you rush headlong into the clearing catching the goblins unawares. You must fight them:
1st Goblin: *Skill*:5; *Stamina*:4.
2nd Goblin: *Skill*:4; *Stamina*:5.
3rd Goblin: *Skill*:5; *Stamina*:3.
If you win, go to **65**, if you lose turn to **82**.

35: Walking a few steps you realise that the scene you have just witnessed is an anathema. Without further thought you draw Stroma and rush back into the clearing surprising the three goblins who you must now fight.
1st Goblin: *Skill*:5; *Stamina*:4.
2nd Goblin: *Skill*:4; *Stamina*:5.
3rd Goblin: *Skill*:5; *Stamina*:3.
If you win, go to **65**, if you lose turn to **82**.

36: The village is in sight off to the south-west, the road runs north/south, you must cross it. Test your luck, if you succeed go to **21**, if you fail turn to **50**.

37: A lone sentry stands by a watch tower overlooking the town. Test your luck, if you succeed go to **67**, if you fail turn to **24**.

38: As your force shows itself on the crest of the hill, the enemy scurry about to deploy. They form up shield to shield and begin their advance, turn to **52**.

39: The weight and force of the enemy was too much for your small force. Outnumbered you are dragged from your horse and killed. Hopefully some of your men escaped the slaughter but you will never know, your adventure is now over.

40: Rolling over you see a ditch a few yards away. Scrambling towards it you take cover. As you reach the ditch a man looms up, spear poised, ready to strike: you must fight.
Soldier: *Skill*:6; *Stamina*:3.
If you win go to **56**, if you lose turn to **82**.

41: Despite the fact that they still outnumber you, virtually as one they throw done their weapons and surrender. Will you slaughter them, go to **85**, or spare them, turn to **63**.

42: 'I know much of the past and I can see your future. Follow me now to my home, perhaps I can teach you things to help you survive.' Do you follow him, turn to **70**, or go your own way, turn to **89**.

43: From the mass of faces familiar features spring into focus, at least a dozen men from your old retinue are here. Clasping them one by one you then stride over to see Jorkell, go to **51**.

44: Not knowing which way to turn the goblins scuttle back and forth as your men cut into them from all sides. There are two hundred of the enemy. For each five of your troopers throw two dice, if any 1 is thrown it means a casualty for your side. Then times the first dice roll by the second and this is how many enemy are killed. Do the same for you and Jorkell. Continue this until you have either, been killed or wiped out, go to **39**, or the enemy has been reduced to 125, turn to **41**.

45: In the dim light of the hut, you notice scuff marks on the floor, and the study shows signs of a struggle. You realise that Barnak must have captured Asmund. Storming outside and mounting your horse you gallop back to Kari, turn to **31**.

46: You wake, the cats spring up ready for the off. Gathering your belongings and covering the ashes of your fire you head off towards the town. You walk for an hour or so, then the town is in sight, spread along the winding road in the distance. There are guards in familiar black uniforms standing at the gate - from here you can see at least four. Will you head straight for the gate, go to **15**, or scout around for another entrance, turn to **37**.

47: The two cats stare at you for a moment and then turn, walking side-by-side, north-east. Do you follow them, turn to **7**, or do you ignore them, go to **74**.

48: Riding on towards the castle, the road is still clear, ahead is an unmanned roadblock. Jorkell orders a detachment of men to clear the obstacle, and then you ride on. One last turn in the road and the castle is in sight sitting loftily on the base of the rising moutain range, the snow capped peaks still white with snow. Dismounting you survey the scene. You will need a great many more soldiers to take the castle than you have now. Will you head on back to Kari, go to **9**, or will you go and have a look at Skalah turn to to **4**.

49: You hand him the sword. Taking it and giving the jewel an expert twist he pulls the gem from its socket. Holding the crystal aloft light seems to spring to and from it. He takes his stick and attaches the gem to one end. 'Now,' he says, his voice strangely bolder, stronger and more firm, 'we can prepare for the business at hand. Sleep now and we will begin on the morrow.' He shows you to a bed and then ambles off. Lying down, you drift contentedly off to sleep. Turn to **58**.

50: A terrific force slams into your shoulder, knocking you down. A crossbow bolt is imbedded there up to its flight, lose 4 stamina. A voice booms out, 'Surrender now or we will cut you down, dog!' Do you surrender, go to **75**, or do you stay down, turn to **40**.

51: With the crowd close on your heels, you approach the block where a tall thin man with an unkempt wiry beard stands. He bows, saying, 'I am Jorkell, your servant, Corwin.' You hand him the fragment of Asmund's gem, he takes out a circular metal device, and places the stone in it, light flashes, and the people cheer again. 'At least here Barnak's sorcery is gone. Now we must destroy his creatures in the barracks. Will you accompany me?' Do you go, turn to **77**, or leave it to him, go to **94**.

52: The enemy is quickly upon you. For every five of your men, throw 1 die. Each 1 or 2 that is thrown means a casualty for your side, multiply the die roll by 4 and this is how many goblins have been killed. There are two hundred of them. Repeat the same procedure for yourself and Jorkell, a throw of a 1 means death, multiply yours or Jorkell's roll by 5 for enemy casualties. Continue until either of the following has happened: you are killed or your force has been wiped out, go to **39**, or the enemy has been reduced to 100, turn to **41**.

53: Riding at the head of your depleted force, with prisoners saved for interrogation, you decide that you must go to see Asmund for further advice. Bidding farewell to Jorkell and the soldiers you promise to be back within a couple of days, turn to **10**.

54: Walking for some minutes you sense a change in the cats - their ears are pricked up and they keep turning constantly to the north-east. Suddenly a wild boar crashes from the undergrowth, head down, and hurtling straight towards you. Will you set the cats on it, go to **11**. Use Asmund's Floating Spheres, turn to **30**, or face it yourself, go to **92**.

55: Presently you happen upon a clearing. In the centre stand three goblins prodding a bound man with the tips of their spears. Will you draw Stroma and charge, go to **34**, or will you circle around to get a better view, turn to **87**.

56: As three scramble down to meet you, a blood curdling scream rings out beyond them. Taking your chance you rush them, go to **3**.

57: A soldier rushes over to you and says, 'Sire, it is Jorkell - he lives!' You run over to a group of soldiers helping the battered man stand,

'You've not forgotten the lessons the king taught you then,' he croaks.

'No', you say with a smile. Rounding up the horses you ride off back towards Kari, turn to **53**.

58: Awakening, it would seem that sleep has recovered many of your ills: if you were injured before return all your abilities to normal. The old man is busy preparing a meal. After a wash and something to eat, you see lying on your bed a new set of clothes. A thin but strong surcoat, a long red cloak and a striped wolf-skin stole with two oddly fashioned shoulder guards. One bears the mythical war beast of Skeln, whilst the other bears the eye of fortune. Propped against the wall is an eight foot hunting lance and a shield with the mask of death emblazoned upon it.

'They have been crafted for you; they will be both your guardians and your mark. Come, I have a test for you', says Asmund.

Following him outside you find the air full of many shimmering lights. 'Take the lights from the air,' he says. Do you make a grab for the nearest one, go to **26**, or do you hold out your hand and concentrate, turn to **12**.

59: Half climbing, half hoisted onto a cart you stand erect and begin to address the crowd: 'I am Corwin, son of Cormac, rightful Duke of Skeln. The throne has been usurped, stolen by Barnak, the Dark Usuper! I need warriors who are willing to fight for freedom, but life can never be as it was. I pledge a new tomorrow, a new future for all, but we must act swiftly to destroy the creature that has destroyed so much that we love.'

The crowd raise a cheer as you step down. Do you look amongst the crowd for old comrades, go to **43**, or do you go to find Jorkell at the barracks, turn to **51**.

60: The goblins swing around to face you as you draw Stroma at the half run. You must now fight them.
1st Goblin: *Skill*:5; *Stamina*:4.
2nd Goblin: *Skill*:4; *Stamina*:5.
3rd Goblin: *Skill*:5; *Stamina*:3.
If you win go to **13**, if you lose turn to **82**.

61: Riding up to the crest of a hill you can see the oncoming mass of goblins. There are at least two hundred of them. You have fifty men, plus Jorkell. Which tactic will you employ? Headlong frontal charge, go to **16**, ride around and encircle the enemy, turn to **23**, or stand your ground and let them come to you go to **38**.

84

62: Terrified, the goblins realise if they stand they at least have a chance. The first line of horsemen hits buckling their line, the second impacts and drives deep into them. There are two hundred of them, for every five troopers throw two dice: for each 1 or 2 thrown you lose 1 man, then multiply the two dice scores by each other and that is how many goblins are killed; do the same thing for you and Jorkell, a 1 only means death. If you are killed or your force wiped out go to **39**, if the enemy are reduced to 100 or less go to **41**. Continue the action until you have a result

63: Rounding them up you head back towards Kari, triumphant, the din of battle still ringing in your ears. If Jorkell was a casualty, test your luck, if you succeed go to **79**, if you fail turn to **57**. If he was not hit go to **53**.

64: 'I know many things Corwin, of your problems and how you may settle them. Will you come with me to my home.' Do you follow him, go to **70**, or do you decide to go your own way, turn to **89**.

65: The man crouches motionless, his eyes wide with appreciation. Bending down to cut him free, you see that his face is old and wrinkled. When the last knot is cut he staggers to his feet and walks over to his scattered possessions. Applying a small pinch of herbs to a bleeding wound, he emits a high pitched whistle, turn to **84**.

66: Your hunch was right, the village is now in sight. Do you continue straight towards it, go to **14**, or do you scout around to the north-west, turn to **36**.

67: The man sinks to the ground, your knockout blow has stunned him. The walls of the city are too high to climb so you must make your way through the city gate, go to **15**.

68: You sit at the table, sipping cider, you are content to wait for some hours. Test your luck, if you succeed go to **45**, if you fail turn to **5**.

69: You are quite lost, your aimless wanderings compounding your situation. Stopping for a moment you hear a scream off to the north. Do you go to investigate, **55**, or continue wandering around, turn to **88**.

70: 'Come,' says Asmund, turning about. The two cats spring up and follow him. He walks in silence, the pumas loping along beside him. It is an almost comical sight - a hunched man and two large feline predators. Still unsure you tag along, at a respectable distance. The old man leads you along paths known only to him, penetrating what looks like dead-ends. After a while you finally enter a small clearing with a solidly built wooden house dominating it. The old man enters, and you follow him in, go to **2**.

71: Very quickly you find that you are used to the pumas walking along beside you. Soon it is evening, a still, oppressive evening - the sun dying in the west, a succession of black thunder clouds rising higher and higher across the intense blue of the sky. Your resolve is strong. In the distance is a glow illuminating the scenery, it must be Kari. You decide to camp the night and continue in the morning, turn to **46**.

72: Asking a man for Jorkell, he points towards the barrack block beyond the low dwellings. Do you go there now, turn to **51**, or do you look amongst the crowd for some of your old warriors, turn to **43**.

73: Wishing you still had Aryl you mount a sturdy yet placid bay mare. You turn to survey the troop of soldiers that Jorkell has summoned. 'Sire would you like to investigate the situation to the west (**29**) or shall we ride towards the castle (**78**),' asks Jorkell.

74: The cats stop in their tracks, and stare at you. It is obvious that they will not leave you. You turn towards them and they leap up and run off with you in pursuit. As you crash through the undergrowth you see three figures standing over a fourth; you realise that you must save the man, go to **60**.

75: Standing up you cast Stroma to the floor. A dozen black clad men rush at you. Test your luck, if you fail turn to **76**, if you succeed go to **80**.

76: A small unshaven man levels his crossbow at you, squints and fires. You hit the ground with a *thud*, turn to **82**.

77: Stepping into the barracks you find a few frightened goblins ready to defend themselves. Do you choose to attack them, go to **33**, or spare them, turn to **18**.

78: The road ahead is clear, the scouts report the sighting of a large body of the enemy to the north-west. After fifteen minutes or so you reach the track leading to Skalah. Will you continue on towards the castle, go to **48**, or will you turn off and go to Skalah, turn to **4**.

79: Picking your way through the corpses, you stumble upon Jorkell. He appears to be dead, blood smeared across his face. Several goblins lie dead around him. Bending over him you detect slight breathing; propping him up, he splutters, wheezes then exhales: 'Sire, you are alive! All is still well.' Helping him on to a horse, you head back to Kari. Turn to **53**.

80: A blood curdling scream rings out beyond the men, they turn, and you grab your chance and Stroma, lifting the blade on high you scream back 'For Skeln!' and rush at the three nearest men, go to **3**.

81: Walking north nothing seems to disrupt the tranquility and atmosphere of the forest. Your slow progress belies the urgency and growing concern you have. Make a luck roll, if you succeed go to **55**, fail turn to **69**.

82: You die, struggling even as your life blood drains away. Your adventure is at an end.

83: The same thing happens, obviously there must be another way; holding your hand out and concentrating you turn to **12**.

84: The two pumas emerge from the thicket. You place your hand on Stroma, about to draw when a sharp command rings out from the man and the cats sit down some ten yards away. Turn to **25**.

85: The men do not have to be ordered twice and fall upon the helpless goblins and massacre them. If Jorkell was a casualty test your luck, if you succeed go to **79**, if you fail turn to **57**. If he was not hit go to **53**.

86: 'I have a safe place, and maybe some guidance for you.' Do you follow him, turn to **70**. Or do you decide to go your own way, go to **89**.

87: Creeping around the edge of the clearing, you can see that the man is wounded. Although he must be in great pain he only cries out when the goblins stab him again. He looks old with his grey beard, and non-descript clothes. The goblins chatter to each other in between stabbing the man. A pouch lies strewn on the forest floor, its contents scattered and discarded. Do you decide to attack now, go to **34**, or decide to leave the man to his fate, turn to **35**.

88: The calmness of the forest is broken by a padding sound behind you. Swinging around you find two large pumas staring at you, poised as if in mid-step. Do you draw your sword, go to **20**, or decide to wait, turn to **47**.

89: With reluctance in his voice, he says, 'Try to keep to the forest as far as you can, do not trust anyone, your destiny is in your own hands.' He turns and vanishes into the undergrowth, the cats have also gone. You are alone again with only the corpses of the goblins to keep you company. Will you head towards the village, go to **90**. Search the corpses, go to **32**. Or walk deeper into the forest, turn to **19**.

90: Walking vaguely west, the forest begins to thin, lengthening your strides you can see trees beyond the rolling hills. The village of Skalah is near. Racking your brains you remember that one of your old retinue lives there. Hopefully he will not have been taken yet. Do you head west, go to **66**, or north-west, turn to **36**.

91: 'I am Jorkell, garrison commander here at Kari and your servant, Corwin. The situation is grave; I can barely keep control here. Some may see my limited co-operation as treasonable, but I swear that I have only worked for him to prevent there being a permanent garrison of Barnak's men stationed here. Will you ride with me and I will show you the extent of Barnak's control.' Go to **73**.

92: The creature is almost on you as you swing Stroma to face it.
Wild Boar: *Skill*:5; *Stamina*:5.
If you win go to **22**, if you lose turn to **82**.

93: 'Good, you learn quickly. There is more but we have no time. I must tell you what you have to do. To the north is a town, go there and find a man called Jorkell, he will help you to defeat Barnak. Take with you this fragment of my own gem stone and my pumas, Melar and Thorkell; they will protect you and act as a sign for people to know that their freedom is near. For it is written:

When the fair headed man comes forth,
His garments red as blood,
His devices strange and wild cats for kin,
Smite shall he the beast, and we shall be free.

'That my friend is you, or what you will be when you have donned your new garb.' You put on the equipment and walk out with Asmund who leads you to the edge of the forest. He stops and points the way for you. Walking on for a hundred yards or so you turn, Melar and Thorkell by your side, your spear aloft. He signals back, raising his stick in the air, the green gem glowing. Sternly you turn again and walk on. Will you head due north, go to **71**, or will you go north-west, turn to **54**.

94: Jorkell shrugs, 'So be it,' and gestures to a few men in the crowd to follow him, there is a brief clatter of weapons and Jorkell re-emerges holding a creature's head in his hand. Throwing the head down he asks you to follow him to his quarters, turn to **91**.

95: Jorkell stands by a map of the area, studying it intently, spinning around he greets you, 'Sire I did not expect you back so soon.'

'Barnak has Asmund,' you explain. Jorkells face darkens, 'He moves very fast, Barnak must be frightened to take such risks.'

'Who is Asmund?'

'He is the last of his kin, a true wizard, if you like. I myself do not understand how he did not forsee this.'

'We must free him; to do that we must prepare for war. Do we have any allies left?'

'Yes, sire. Berwin has a group of plainsmen to the west; with volunteers and mercenaries we can raise nearly a thousand men.'

'Good, we must make our plans.'

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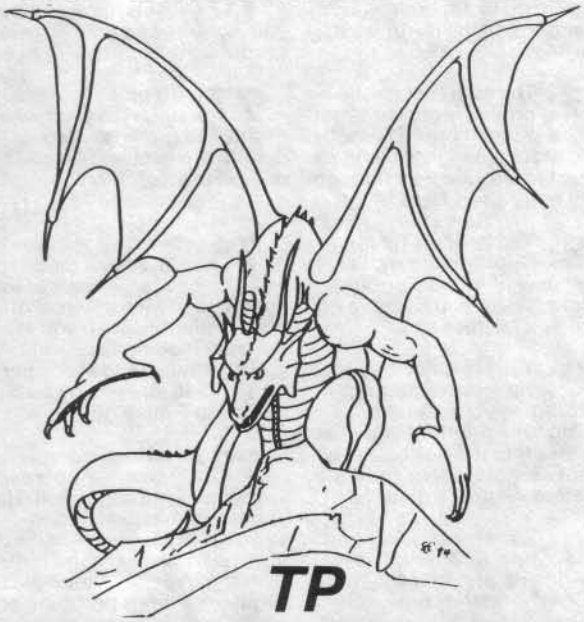

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EN GARDE

Parrying in AD&D

by Gary Drabwell

Melee in *D&D* tends to be a trifle limited in scope. Our would-be heroes beat up their opponents, are beaten up by them, or somebody runs away. Sometimes characters have no choice at all, and are forced by circumstances to participate in unavoidably terminal combat - which can prove unpleasant. Take, for example, Nigel the Not-So-Wonderful, a first level fighter of little renown. Now suppose that Nigel's enthusiasm is as boundless as his ability is limited, and that he has wandered away from his pals to do a little exploring on his, own only to find himself confronted by the ill-tempered Arastor the Swift, who decides to decapitate him. Arastor happens to be an eighth level fighter with an awful lot of hit points, some excellent magical armour, and a *Vorpal Sword*. Moreover, he is both bigger and faster than the unfortunate Nigel, who has, therefore, little chance of escape by flight, and none by battle.

But what if Nigel's 5th level comrades are resting only a few rooms away and can can hear the poor lad's cries for help and pleas for mercy? They don't know where he is, but in just a few rounds they might discover him - has Nigel no hope of valiantly holding out against Arastor's cruel and ferocious assaults until the cavalry arrive? Well, as the rules stand at present, no!

Suppose, however, that he should forgoe any attempts to actually injure Arastor, and try instead to parry that worthy's fell blows? The most that this could achieve under the existing rules, is to negate any strength bonus his opponent might have. As Arastor has none, parrying would have no effect. My suggestion is that this situation would be more variable, exciting, and most importantly, more fun, if there were a way in which Nigel could possibly block his assailant's attacks until assistance arrived. His chance for success in this case of grotesque mis-matching would be far from enormous, but any chance is better than none at all.

When one of any two (human, humaniod, or demi-human) combatants decides to attempt to parry, then I suggest that the following be applied: Each character is given a base of 50 points to which additions are made according to relevant characteristics.

Class: Fighters = 10 points; Clerics =7 points; Thieves =6 points; Magic Users =0 points; Monks = 8 points (if fighting with a weapon).

Level: Fighters are awarded 3 points per level, whilst all other classes gain only 2 per level.

Strength: For each strength point that a character possesses in excess of 14, he gains 1 parrying point eg: 17 strength = 3 points, and 18 strength = 4 points. But 18/01 to 18/75 gives 5 points, while 18/76 to 18/00 gives 6.

Dexterity: For each point of dexterity above 10 award 1 point.

Magical Weapon Bonus: For each magical 'plus' a weapon has award 2 points eg: 6 points a +3 sword. This applies also to special swords - Arastor's *Vorpal Blade* should have no major advantage in either parrying or in penetrating an opponent's whirling defence.

Weapon Factor: Clearly some weapons will be more useful than others in such combat; swords will prove superior to knives, and who would care to try deflecting the swing of a two-handed axe with a flail? I therefore offer the following as suggestions as to the score value of some weapons. (NB This rating is based upon their average utility as defensive and offensive articles.) Battle Axe – 6, Hand axe – 4, Club – 5, Dagger – 1, Flail – 3, Military Fork – 6, Hammer – 3, Mace – 4, Short Sword – 7, Bastard Sword – 5, Broad Sword – 6, Long sword – 8, Military Pick – 6, Quarter Staff – 10, Two-handed Sword – 4, Pointed Stick = 0.

Wooden weapons, at least, should be given a small chance of breaking - say 2% each blow for a quarter-staff.

Specials: Other factors may warrant taking into account, eg. the size of weapon and weight of blow from, say a stone giant. Points should be allocated as seems appropriate.

The combined score for each character involved must be determined - for simplicity before the base award is added. Then the lesser total should be subtracted from the greater and the result added to the base score of 50. This creates a number to be used as a percentage. Now, should the character with the greater score wish to parry, then he must score below the number arrived at on percentage dice to succeed. Should the character who had the lowest total wish to parry, then he must throw above that percentage number. Only the character wishing to parry need throw initially, for only if he fails does his opponent push an attack through, and even then he still has to penetrate the defenders's armour class.

Anyway, having been divinely granted knowledge of such new rules, the terrified Nigel elects to parry. Let us then work out his chances of success. Arastor shall serve as our main example:

Class: Fighter	= 10 points
Level: 8 (fighter)	= 24 points
Strength: 16	= 2 points
Dexterity: 16	= 6 points
Magical Weapon Bonus: +3 Sword	= 6 points
Weapon: Long Sword	= 8 points
Total:	= 56 points

Nigel's total turns out to be a mere 27 - not too inspiring! Subtract 27 from 56 and we are left with 29 to be added to the base 50, giving 79% as the score Nigel must throw above to successfully parry a blow (if for any reason it was Arastor who had elected to parry, he would need to throw below 79% to be successful).

The DM determines that Arastor will find time for only three attacks before Nigel's chums appear. Let battle commence:

Nigel begins with a brilliant 91%, and so twists Arastor's sword into a nearby table, which is promptly transformed into firewood. Undeterred, Arastor strikes again, a wicked up-thrust which drives through Nigel's flailing defence (24%!) - but will it pierce his armour? Oh dear! I'm afraid it has; he threw a 16, stripping young Nigel of three quarters of his hit points. Time for but one more attack and fate hangs in the balance, as Arastor lunges towards Nigel's throat. "Let the die be cast!" thinks Nigel, as he desperately hurls his sword at the onrushing blade, and YES! (84%) he pushes the deadly blow aside at the last moment. Isn't this the stuff heroic fantasy is made of?

Well, the liberators have arrived and they launch themselves at Arastor with no thought of personal safety. Which is a shame, really, as he decapitates two in rapid succession before cutting all shapes of pieces from the hapless remainder. Ah well, such a price must true heroes pay - if only they had listened to their mothers . . .

However, the slightly less heroic Nigel, who often listened to his dear old Mum, has made good his escape, having kept his head in a number of ways.

A few suggestions before I finish. Any roll which comes within 5% of the required score, might be judged a partial block, and if the armour class is beaten, ½ damage is awarded.

Two-handed characters, ie those that fight with a weapon in each hand, should be allowed to parry with their first hand whilst attacking with their second - with the extra penalty of –3 from their 'to hit' rolls.

DMs should remember that NPCs may also resort to parrying tactics, high level characters can have a little harmless fun by provoking low level reckless types to attack them. They may then, quite happily, parry feeble attacks, until their low level assailants become exhausted, or starve to death.□

The Androx Diaries

So far Androx has got himself signed up in The Extraordinary Register, albeit rather painfully, and we find him just about to leave Largaktyll for The Academy of Elite .....

A dewy dampness cooled the air as the West Gate creaked open and the caravan of merchants and prospective scholars moved out of the city. I was on my greatest adventure .... up to that time.

The sun peered over the horizon and I peered back. A thrill ran through my body, what a heady experience for one so used to routine and ennui !

Our party comprised of four pack-mules, a guard dog and eight people, two on horseback, one of whom was our guide, a swarthy well-muscled fighter whose name was Freda Peepal.

With their attendant guards, drivers and servants the fifteen merchants perused one another's wares that ranged from pelts to gems. Obviously not everything was on display, therefore much of the first few miles was spent by the merchant's lackeys racing from carriage to carriage, with bids, exchanges and messages. Everything quietened down after one of them got squashed under the wheels of the wine trader's vehicle.

Up to this time our party had been looking on with wild amusement. The other mounted member of our party, a rather portly chap of medium height with heavy features, thought the crunch of bone and squishing of flesh inordinately funny, and his laughter bellowed approval.

A voice uttered behind me,

"Laugh again, Fatso, and I'll burn you to a crisp !"

It sounded familiar.

Looking round, the grimy "I'm not cross-eyed so I must be !"

The rider turned away disdainfully, but with an air of uncertainty.

I turned to the victor of this banter and was treated once again to the decaying clamour of his teeth. It was a wonder his breath wasn't rancid.

"Never fails, eh !" This was directed at me with another wink.

"I'm sure I've never tried."

"Cor ! You're a sport, aintcha ?" and he cackled once again, slapped me on the back and carried on walking. So did I. Catching him up I said quietly individual that I had last seen groaning over upturned benches winked at me, then he concentrated on the rotund creep, who said,

"Are you addressing me ?"

"There's more to you than meets the eye."

Looking to see if anyone was listening, he said

"Wot d'yer mean ?"

"Your breath doesn't smell."

A pause, then,

"'erbs."

"Urbs ?"

"No, 'erbs."

"Oh ..... Herbs."

"Yeh, that's it, 'erbs."

"But you don't smell of them either."

"They sortta cancel one anovva out'." He looked uncomfortable, so I tried a feint .....

"I thought you handled that situation back there very well. I was very impressed." I sounded really friendly.

"Oh ! Fanks a lot." He smiled at me. I looked at his teeth, and he turned away .....now a lunge .....

"Let's see the herbs."

What he said next made me forget how to walk and I stumbled. It wasn't so much what he said as how he said it. The voice was a resonant, educated, well-bred intonation, almost musical.

"My dear fellow, you are a most astute observer, I must compliment you, but could we possibly keep this between ourselves ?"

It was like talking to a ventriloquist's dummy. I was about to stammer something when he eruditely explained

"I am sorry that I find myself in a position of which I can give no account, but trust your good nature will interceed on my behalf."

"Oh yeh .... sure" was all I managed.

The shadows shortened as the pale gold disc burned into morning and chased the hues of dawn from the sky.

By the time lunchtime came around it was getting quite hot, so we camped for two hours while the sun was most brilliant. It was an opportunity to talk to some of my fellow travellers. I approached a genial looking guy, who was smiling at everyone. His garb was about as rich as mine, so I felt some empathy. Our conversation was not enhanced by his affliction, and went something like this:-

"Hello there, my name's Androx, what's your's ?"

"Derek."

"Well hello there Derek, good to meet you."

"Mease to pleet you too."

"Pardon."

"I pled, mease to seat you too."

"Oh .... nice weather, though."

"Bun's a hit sot."

"I expect so."

I gazed round wondering how to get away from this weirdo, when the chap standing next to us leaned over to me and said,

"You'll have to excuse 'im, matey, 'e gets 'is words all muddled up, dontcha Derek ?" Bloater breath wafted sickeningly over me,

"Yes its trite queue. I hent calp it."

"Oh I see ! Goodness me, I thought you were a foreigner" I blythly explained.

For a moment a shadow passed over his features, then he smiled again and said,

"Am I."

By the time we broke camp I had found out that our party consisted of the man of naval persuation, a retired doctor who could communicate with corpses; an aspiring singer who realised she could walk on water (what a finale that would make !); a banker could turn lead in to gold; a butcher who could talk to animals (It was he that found the mangled messenger so amusing. In fact his horse had said "One down, 89,768,479 to go!"); our word-juggling friend who could "Gittoldsherds", whatever that may mean; Mr. Mystery with the painted teeth, who kept himself detached; Freda and myself.

The merchants made separate camps and started roaming around trading with each other, obviously it was how they passed their time.

The afternoon was pretty uneventful as we moved steadily westwards. Everybody seemed to exhaust conversation with the passing of miles. It was approaching evening and we set up camp, we were at the start of the Great Savannah of Wunderlict.

After a meal we all retired, with the exception of Freda and Mr. Mystery, and I was soon asleep.

A gentle shake prompted the rapid awakening proccesses and as I propped myself up on my elbow, I stared at the lightening sky whilst slowly peeling back the layers of slumber.

The grasslands stretched ahead and the mountains gradually fell behind, the sun continued to shine, I learnt a new dice game and lost three silver pieces to the banker, apart from that not a lot happened.

The merchants left us on the third day, taking a southerly track not dissimilar to ours. The strange silence after the bartering faded away ..... only eight of us !

We preceeded westwards for another six days (Mr. Mystery kept darting into the wilds, sometimes returning looking decidedly dishevelled). The final three featured another impressive range of mountains to our fore.

I couldn't get over the ease of our passage. I had heard horrific tales of disappearing parties, carnage, slavery and whatnot, but we seemed to be charmed in some way. I felt Mr. Mystery had something to do with it, so I followed him, or at least tried to. He moved so fast once he'd left the trail that I lost him .... and myself. Thinking of those terrifying stories once again, I was suddenly thrown into a blind panic, I started to run and ran straight back on the track, just ahead of the party ! So profuse was I with exclaimations of relief and thanks that everyone told me what a wally I was. Suitably embarrassed I fell to walking in silence at the rear. It wasn't just landings I had problems with, what I needed was confidence.

On the twelfth day the grass suddenly stopped and we approached the dustbowl in which lay the Academy.

The backdrop of mountains was impressive enough, but the imposing column of rock, with the Academy on top, was truly remarkable (WD 59). As we neared the base of that column we could see a lone figure standing by the drawbridge. His features gradually became distinct, he looked familiar. We were within twenty feet when we all pointed at him and said, "That's me !" in unison, whereupon the figure blurred and there stood a thick-set, middle-aged man, with a fierce expression, who said

"So this is the bunch of whining whimps I've got to make something of, is it ? Well let me tell you ..." he started to walk towards us ".... I'm not going to stand for it a moment longer !" He broke into a run, I broke wind and confusion reigned as the madman rushed at us !

If I hadn't been paralysed with fear I would not have noticed Freda and Mr. Mystery trying not to laugh. However, fear turned to astonishment when the charging loony stopped two feet in front of me and blurred into yet another person.

Standing well over six feet, robes hanging off his almost skeletal frame, bald patch and hooked nose glistening in the settin sun, his beady eyes seemed to glow redly as his gash of a mouth said,

"Welcome .... to The Academy of Elite, my dear friends." His chuckle sounded like a badly sprung bed. "Here you shall learn much or forget all !" and with a flash of light he disappeared!

We sheepishly followed Freda and Mr. Mystery into the open maw of a strange new world. All at once I could feel a tight knot of dread rise to my throat as we passed through that portal. In a thin hushed voice, the singer echoed all our thoughts,

"Let's hope I live long enough to find out how unforgettable this experience really is !"

Phew ! What a thrilling installment ! I trust you'll tune in next month and catch the next mind-reeling episode of "The Androx Diaries".

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AN ALIEN WEREWOLF IN LONDON

31st August 1888

By Jae Campbell

This is a *Traveller* scenario for 2-4 players, who belong to an Imperial intelligence organisation such as the Covert Survey Bureau.

Computer Library Data
RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VARGR RACE
INTELLIGENT MAJOR RACE RESULTING FROM ANCIENT GENETIC MANIPULATION OF TERRAN CARNIVORE STOCK FROM THE *CANIDAE* FAMILY *CANIS* GENUS. THE TYPICAL VARGR IS NOT VERY IMPRESSIVE AVERAGING ABOUT 1.6M IN HEIGHT AND 60KG IN WEIGHT, THEY ARE UPRIGHT BIPEDS AND REAR LIMBS DIGITI-GRADE. THEY HAVE MANIPULATIVE ORGANS SIMILAR IN SIZE AND APPEARANCE TO HUMAN HANDS, SLIGHTLY FASTER REACTIONS AND SUPERIOR SENSES IN SMELL AND SIGHT. THE TYPICAL VARGR IS INDEPENDENT WITH A TENDENCY TOWARDS INSTABILITY AND RESENTMENT OF AUTHORITY - RESPECTING SUPERIORS THEY KNOW AND ADMIRE RATHER THAN A REMOTE AUTHORITY. THEY ARE ALSO INTENSELY PROUD OF THEIR RACE AND ARE EASILY INSULTED, ENTERING INTO FIGHTS WITHOUT CONSIDERING THE CONSEQUENCES (FOR FURTHER DETAILS SEE *SUPPLEMENT 11 LIBRARY DATA N-Z*)

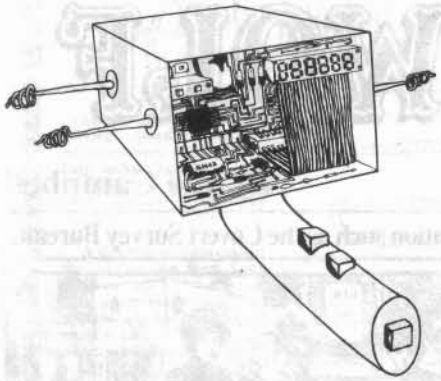
PLAYERS' BRIEFING

Last night, at 0300 hours, a break-in was recorded at the Temporal Research Foundation (on the outskirts of Haut-Devroe Downport on Terra), where top secret research on the nature of the universe has been going on for the last ten years. The investigating security team discovered the two-on duty guards just inside the building; one was already dead, his throat had been torn out and his spine had been broken in two places. The other guard was alive, barely. He also had been severely savaged and failed to return to consciousness. Investigation of the laboratory later by one of the scientists in charge revealed that a top secret device, an extraterrestial artifact discovered on the planet Minerva ten years ago; a Temporal Matter transport or T-Matt had been activated and a portable control device was missing. The T-Matt is a machine that is capable of creating a vortex through time and space which the portable control which had been nick-named 'Passports', can by psionic means manipulate a specified space-time location. There is no possible way that the culprit could have left the building except by escaping through time!

The scientists have located the culprit, using a tracer that is built into the passport to August 1888, London where it has apparently stabilised. Medics examining the bodies of the guards have determined that they were killed by a vargr who had ripped their throats out with his fangs then exhibiting abnormal strength had snapped their spines. Further investigation of the wounds revealed minute traces of Hyperdexamine - our vargr is a combat drug addict which is highly addictive and is now stuck back in time without a supply. Our psychiatrist has come up with a theory that our vargr was already verging on insane due to addiction and broke into the research foundation in order to steal something to sell for more drugs. Your task is to return in time, track down and capture our vargr 'friend' and if possible, wipe out any trace of his, and your, adventure into the past. The scientists have warned us that any change of the past must be rectified before you return or history as you know it may have changed beyond recognition. At all costs you must avoid drawing attention to yourselves, avoid leaving behind anything that could alter the future, and above all, avoid hurting anyone of that time period. The research historians have been working throughout the night to try and create 'authentic' period costumes and have compiled all the information we have on this little known period of Terran history . . . Before you go, one further point is that the vargr is believed to be armed with a scalpel-like blade which he used to stab the second guard through the abdomen with - he must be considered both insane and highly dangerous, dismissed!

T-Matts, Passports and Time Travel

The T-Matt is an Ancient's device (Tech 18+) that is capable of creating an artificial nexus into the Tau energy field - an energy that permeates the whole multiverse and co-exists everywhere and everywhen simultaneously. The nexus results in a whirlwind-like storm within the energy field around the nexus, the 'eye' of the Tau storm; anything caught in the 'eye' will be expelled out into the multiverse at a completely different location and time . A secondary function of the T-Matt is that of being able to plot psychic traces through the storm to their site of origin. It then records the temporal and spatial co-ordinates on a computer clip for use by the 'passports' - a type of electrical compass that allows the passports to interpret the storm pattern and use it to cast anything trapped within its protective field out into the multiverse approximately at the plotted co-ordinates. These psychic traces or echoes originate from one or two sources, either as part of an individual's psionc talent; the ability to project and the Tau field (Telepathy & Special) or the ability to read and trace individuals emotions (which permeate the energy field) back to a source point. The T-Matt is capable of analysing physical objects which, because of 'witnessing' or being used in highly emotional circumstance (such as a particularly violent murder) has retained a distinctive aura that cannot be eradicated and which can be traced back to aura's point of origin. On the night of the break-in the T-Matt had been plotting a distinctive psychic echo that had originated in Victorian London and a 'destination' clip had been prepared, been placed in a passport and forgotten - what the Vargr has not got is a clip with the return co-ordinates!



The passports are gun-like devices [see diagram] which create a protective field around the wearer and anything or anyone he or she is holding and proceeds to phase them into the Tau energy field where, assuming they have a destination com-clip, the passport interprets the direction and force of the storm and uses the knowledge to ride out of the storm at the approximate temporal/spatial co-ordinates. Without a destination com-clip, the passports will phase the wearer into the storm and protect the wearer from the buffeting of the storm. But it cannot control where the wearer will come out - this is exactly the same function that the emergency activate buttons perform with the advantage that it will phase out within one combat round unlike the activate button for the psychic tracer which takes 1-6 combat rounds. In order for the unit to work the passport has to be attached to a living creature so that its telemetry sensors are in contact with the body, if the unit is not deactivated (this is done by removing the 'activate button' circuit before removing the unit), then 1-6 combat rounds after the sensors are removed from the wearer the passport will create a shield around itself and automatically activate its emergency circuits and phase out, (if the unit is being held when it phases out the unit will take the person's fingers with it while leaving the rest of the body behind) that unit is now considered lost and may turn up anywhere and anywhen in a deactivated form. At the base of the unit is a tracer signal unit which leaves a psychic trail for the T-Matt to trace. The passports weigh about 0.5kg. It should be noted that nexus do appear naturally throughout the Multiverse.

Note that the tracer can be used as a location of other activated passports in the same space-time location.

TIME TRAVEL Referees Only

The arrival of a person from another time period results in the introduction of a potential catalyst in world history that is capable either consciously or unconsciously, of changing the flow of history. History is changeable and the arrival of someone into a time period does not mean that the person was required to be there to complete historical reality. Nature automatically protects itself and so minor changes to history are like plucking at a rubberband, in that the 'natural' flow of history will reassert itself the further in time you go. As a general rule, the effect of any one person on history is minor and will usually be fulfilled by someone else if that person's influence is removed . . . This means, in general, that the removal of an individual (unless that person was of a major impact on that period) will not affect history too much as individuals who would have come through that line will, because of the racial gene pool, still be born although to someone else and perhaps later than in the previous 'reality'. This does not mean that the removal of major historical characters or their direct family or any sort of interference with the same will not result in major changes in history, it generally will. Joe Smith of no particular importance may be influenced or removed by travellers with little or no effect but even minor interferance with a character like Lincoln or Hitler or their parents and family could result in major upheaval. It should also be noted that the introduction of advanced technology into the past may also affect the flow of history and so should be avoided even to the extent of limiting the players from taking any equipment bar the passports that could not be normally found in that period.

VICTORIAN LONDON Referee's Discretion

Note; it is up to each referee to decide just how much information on Victorian London and the style of living would still exist on record.

The Victorian era was an essential period of history in that it was a transition period leading to the early technological advances upon which we rely so heavily. The British Empire was at its height and the average Briton knew this was not only the proper way of things but also that it would go on forever. The suffering of the poor and the excesses of the rich would eventually be curbed and the British way would continue to progress towards the inevitable conclusion of Victorian thinking - Utopia built upon a foundation of British ideals.

The Empire was, with a few rare intrusions by royalty, in the hands of the Government and the politicians. Victoria had been on the throne for almost fifty years, and was revered and loved because to many she was Britain. God and science, in the minds of the people, had yet to come in conflict with each other, electric light had begun to be installed in London streets, the first tube of underground railway had opened, radio had been invented and the first automobiles were making their hesitant advance into society. Life for most was good yet within the city itself was a dark cancer.

In the dim-lit, fog-strewn streets of London the poor lived in cramped filthy living conditions, thousands were forced to live rough in the streets, dying of disease or malnutrition, their only 'pleasures' were drink, violence and sex - all of which they did to excess. All that was left for many was to sell their bodies just to live. The other classes were dimly aware of the plight of the poor under them but dismissed it as their own fault, their lack of virtues, lack of desire to work etc . . . Transport through London was by railway or Hansom cab a fast, uncomfortable two seater carriage of which 7,000 roamed London. Four seaters known as '*growlers*' or '*Clarences*' also frequented the city and telephones were becoming quite common among the higher classes. Telegrams like letters had 11 deliveries a day (they cost 6d for first 12 words and ½d per additional word) and solved the Victorian need for world-wide communications. Clothes for the men were sombre black or grey with white shirts and ties, hats were frequently worn. Women's clothing was much more colourful with long skirts (with the occasional, scandalous glimpse of ankle), bustles were starting to become less popular. Hats of all shapes and sizes were universal. The poor of Whitechapel had to make do with whatever they could make, beg, steal, or borrow although dress lengths remained conservative. The police or '*bobby*' was very much in evidence throughout London and the use of a firearm openly would automatically result in police presence, though due to their low pay and bad work conditions they were frequently bribable.

Price List

meal	1 s - 3s
mug of beer	2½d
glass of whiskey	3d
suit of clothes	25s+
boots	21s
Hotel lodging	5s - 20s
hostel (double bed)	8d
hostel (single)	4d
rope lean-to	2d
hansom cab fare (1 hr, 4 mile radius)	1s - 2s 6d
omnibus fare	3d (1d -6d)
London guidebook	2s
Underground fare	2d
postage	1d
revolver	£5 10s
100 bullets	11s 6d
rapier	£1 2s

"To Boldly Go . . ."

The characters, dressed in period clothing, armed with whatever knowledge of Victorian London that the referee has given them are handed passports and shown how they work, they are fitted with destination clips and handed return clips and hypo-guns.

Hypo Gun/wrist Hypo

Gas powered needle gun (body pistol skill) that is attached to the wrist and resembles a fine steel bracelet except it fires a 10mm needle at high velocity using a small canister of compressed gas (10 shots) and uses dissolvable needles to inject a sleep drug - the trigger is found on the side and the whole operation is completely silent. There is a chance (12 on 2D6) that a victim will be allergic to the drug and die. Drug does 2d-6d) stun damage.

Range Matrix

Close	Short	Med	Long	V/Long	wound
+3	+2	−3	no	no	1d6*

*needle damage only

Weapons Matrix

nothing	jack	mesh	cloth
+1	0	−1	−4

As you activate the passport attached to your wrist you feel numb all over your body then a few seconds later the sight of the scientists and laboratory start to fade to be replaced by a whirling claustrophic kaleidoscope of colour and sound. A gentle buffeting echoes through your body which itself begins to fade and before your eyes you start to see a vague outline of a large building which clarifies into a street.

You are standing in a doorway of a terraced house, it is a moonless night, pitch black except for a single gas light at the end of the street and the light of a lantern over by the warehouse wall opposite, beside a stable gate where a small crowd has collected. The Vargr is nowhere in sight so you and the rest of the team cross the road to the crowd where you see a police officer bending over a corpse of a girl that has had her throat cut right back to the spine and she has obviously been stabbed many times in the stomach. Blood is everwhere and the people are busy speculating as to who could have done such a monstrous deed when you spot a small amulet lying in the gutter which you manage to pick up. One of the team recognises as a symbol of the Vargr Goddess, KnithnGheu, protector of purity . . . A vague memory enters your mind unbidden as you look back at the corpse - could this Vargr be . . . Jack the Ripper?

(Referees Only) THE VARGR'S AND COL SIR WILLIAM DAVID-ASTOR'S STORY

The Vargr-Gvoudzie, age 42 UPP 6B5899 Unarmed Cbt 3, Blade, 2, Medic 4, computer 3, bribe 1, forgery 1

Gvoudzie, an ex-scout who was cashiered a month previously for theft had become addicted to *Yag* (Hyperdexamine) while in the service and had been unable to locate any since has been forced to go through a painful and mind-distorting withdrawal made worse by the communication barrier that he only speaks Knithnour, Gvegh-Aek, and high Vilani.

Always religious, his mind as it became more and more unbalanced began to dwell on the more unsavoury side of his Goddess, KnithnGheu and particularly the old worship of female sacrifice and preparation. He used up his last dose of Yag and used his drug-reinforced ego to plan his break-in of the nearest Government installation - the Temperal Research Foundation, intending to steal anything he could sell on the blackmarket. He managed to get into the building but succeeded in activating an alarm that alerted the guards. The frustration of being caught finally sent him over the edge and he savagely attacked the guards activating the T-Matt accidently in the process, as the guards lie, bleeding and torn, he grabbed a passport and pushing it into his pocket for safe keeping he accidently pressed the activate button and to his mind's final horror he was catapulted back to Victorian London, early Friday morning, the 31st of August 1888. His only possession apart from his jacket of cloth armour and the passport which he has accidently jammed is a long thin blade. He is trapped in an unknown past.

(Referee's Discretion)
PLOT DEVELOPMENT

Is Gvoudzie the Ripper or merely someone caught up in the hysteria of the period? If the referee doesn't want him to be the Ripper then he would be forced to steal to live and would have to avoid the police and the street patrols, living in the sewers. The adventurers may then have to deal with both the real Ripper and the Vargr. If he is the Ripper then he will be sacrificing female 'animals' to the Goddess and 'preparing' the bodies so that they are acceptable to her. He may also be killing males but removing the bodies of his hideaway where he will devour their bodies. A combination of any of these possible scenarios may be used if desired as there is a theory that the Ripper was actually two different people.

Facts on the Ripper

Male, left handed, believed to be sexually frustrated, was responsible for the murder of at least six prostitutes over the period of August to November 1888. He was never apprehended by the police. He obviously had some medical knowledge, it is also possible that he was a Mason and that the ritualistic killings was to cover-up an indescretion on the part of Victoria's son, the Duke of Clarence which may have resulted in an illegitimate child. [Read '*Jack the Ripper: the Final Solution*' by Stephen Knight.]

Col Sir William David-Astor
38 UPP CBB7AA ex-Bengal Lancers (medical discharge - damaged left leg when his horse fell on him)
Tactics 1, Admin 2, Sword 2, Leader 3, Rifle 2, Brawling 2, Gambling 1

2AM Monday the 3rd of September - While returning from the opera to his house on the edge of Whitechapel he noticed that his window had been broken and fearing a robbery he rushed to the door. As he entered the hall he heard his brother Philip (18) cry out in pain and rushed up to his brother's room grabbing his revolver as he went, he battered the door open and saw a wolf-like creature, dressed in a black cloak and standing on its hind legs savaging the mutilated remains of his brother. Horrified, he fired his revolver again and again at this sinister being with apparently no effect (the bullets were fired at the torso which was protected by the Cloth armour) and in shock he saw the werewolf (for what else could it be?) wrap the bloody sheets around the remains of his brother and escape through the window. After Sir William had stopped being violently sick he rushed out and got a policeman but after examining the room (minute blood traces only), and hearing his story which sounded like the ravings of a deranged mind they dismissed it and went back to working on the horrific murder of Annie Chapman by what the press were beginning to call Jack the Ripper. Sir William swore vengeance on the werewolf and next morning had his sword stick's blade coated in silver as well as getting silver bullets made for his revolver. Each night he hunts through Whitechapel searching for the supernatural creature, his dark, suntanned face, bristling black beard and wild eyes, dressed as he is in a dark cloak and deerstalker will, over the next couple of months, become a familiar sight in the fog-filled streets as he searches for his brother's murderer.

The 'Peelers'

From the 10th of September a reward of £500 will be offered by the MP Samuel Montague for the capture of the Ripper but throughout October the police will be searching for (and eventually apprehending) a John Pizer, nick-named 'Leather Apron' who they believe to the Ripper but who will prove to be innocent. Lt Col Sir Henry Smith of the City police has since August sent a third of his force in plain clothes into the city and from the 30th of September Inspector Abberline, a soft-spoken, rather portly bank manager-like person, will be scouring the East End with his unparalleled knowledge of Whitechapel searching for anything out of the ordinary, anything that could give a clue as to the identity of the Ripper. Assisting him are three inspectors, Reid, Moore and Nairn and four sergeants, Thicke (called '*Johnny Upright*' because of his walk and his method of working), Godley, McCathy and Pearce who can all be brought into play with our mysterious team and with Sir William. . .

THE RIPPER'S VICTIMS

Polly Nichols, 45(?) 4AM Friday the 31st of August. Buck's Row. Throat cut, abdomen stabbed several times.

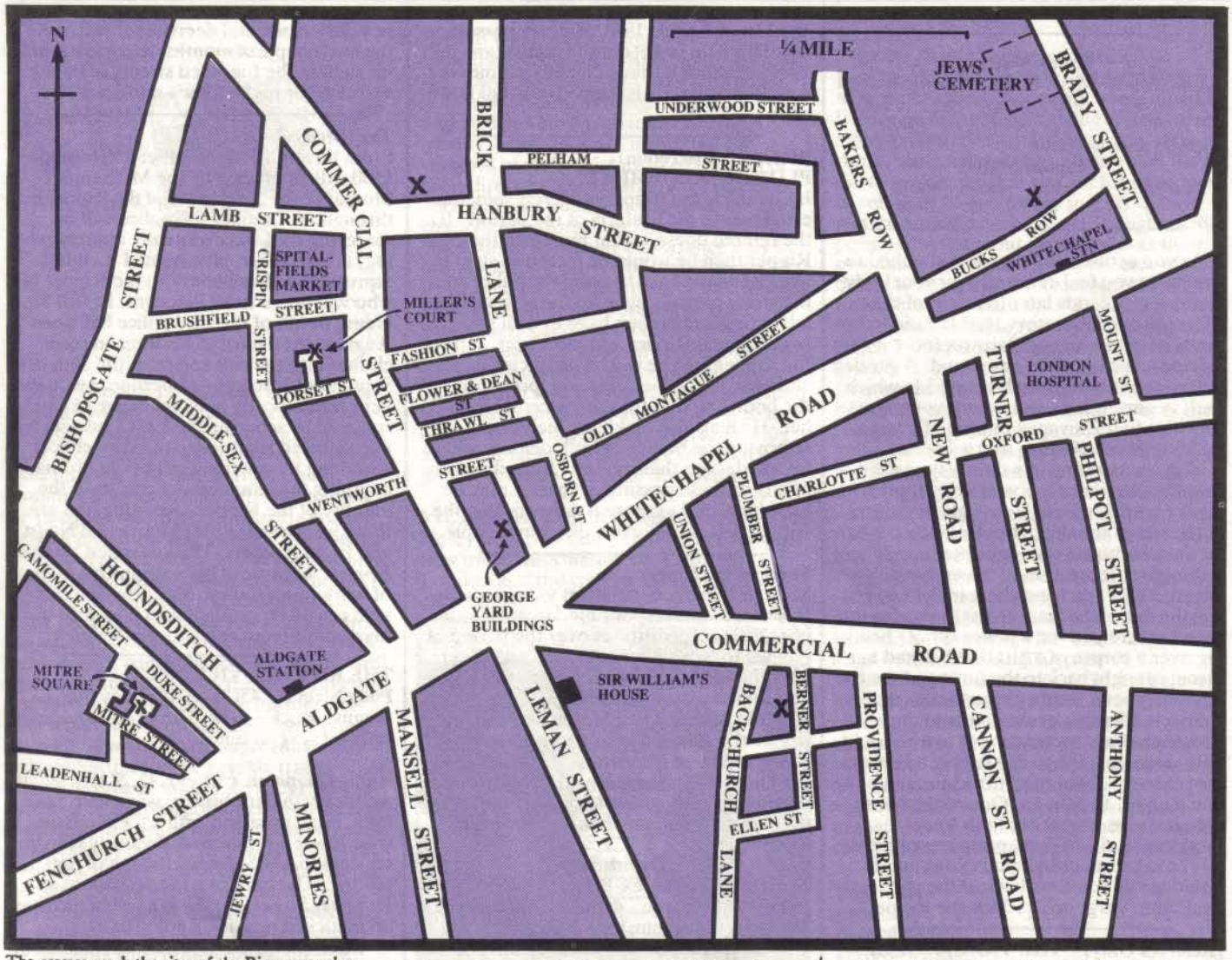
Annie Chapman (*Siffey*) 45, 5' tall, small woman with dark brown, wavy hair, blue eyes, large nose and with 2 teeth missing from lower jaw - she had obviously seen better days. 6AM Saturday the 6th of September. The back of a lodging house at Hanbury Street (No 29) in a yard which has an unlocked passage leading to it.

When found she was face up, palms outstretched with both face and hands covered in blood. As Annie Chapman, but more violently. Her personal belongings such as money had been laid at both the feet and above the head.

Elizabeth (*Long Liz*) **Stride** 40(?) 1AM Sunday the 30th of of September. In a narrow court off Berner Street beside an occupied Working Man's Club (where people were still partying it up) behind some wicker gates. She was lying on the ground with a blood covered right hand covering her chest, her face was quite placid with the mouth slightly open, her throat had been severed but there had been no abdominal wounding.

Catherine Eddowes (?) 1.30AM Sunday the 30th of September, in Mitre Square in the city proper surrounded on 2 sides by warehouses belonging to '*Kearley & Tonge*' (watchman in attendance), on the 3rd side by three empty houses and on the last before the corpse were 2 houses one occupied by a policeman and the other was empty. A policeman patrolled the Square every quarter of an hour and discovered the body at 1.45.

Her throat had been cut in the now familiar pattern and had been badly mutilated. Part of her blood-stained apron had been cut away and was later found at Goulston Street where a message was written in chalk on the wall '*the juwes are not the men that will be blamed for nothing*' (this was the middle of the Jewish sector of London and



The crosses mark the sites of the Ripper murders

may have nothing to do with the actual murder or could be a clue pointing to the Masons).

Mary Jane Kelly (24) 3.30AM Thursday the 9th of November. Room 13 (a back parlour had been partitioned off and with its own front door) No 26 Dorset Street, - first door on the right in Millers Court.

Mary was 3 months pregnant when she was killed by someone who either had a key (which had been lost earlier) or else knew about the broken pane of glass which allowed a person to reach through and open the door. This was perhaps the most bloody of all the murders. Her clothes and other items had been burned in the fireplace.

This was the last murder directly blamed on the Ripper although there were others years later that were similiar in many details. The first murder directly blamed on the Ripper was completely different to all the later murders in that Martha Tabram was stabbed 39 times in the stomach on the first floor landing of the George Yard Buildings at 3AM on Tuesday the 7th of August but no other mutilations were done to the corpse despite the fact that nobody was around. It is highly possible that this murder was actually done by a different person, not the Ripper.

TIME TABLE OF POSSIBLE EVENTS

31st August: Arrival of the Vargr and the killing of Polly Nichols, while fleeing to safety (assuming that he is the Ripper) he drops an amulet. The arrival of the adventurers at the scene of the crime they now need to obtain money and lodgings by some means.

3rd September: Sir William David-Astor witnesses the death of his brother by what he believes to be a werewolf - the event turns his mind and he sets out on a vendetta to avenge his brother's death - from this night on he can be encountered by the adventurers while roaming the streets of Whitechapel - he wants to kill the werewolf and will be suspicious of anyone who also appears to be supernatural though if approached properly he will help by providing lodgings, knowledge of local conditions and provide funds.

6th September: Annie Chapman is murdered, Sir David-Astor will be the first on the scene (as will the adventurers if they have joined forces with him, otherwise they will encounter Sir David-Astor bent over the corpse and the inertial locator built into their passports which they were using to track the signal from the Vargr's passport to this location has suddenly gone silent). If the adventurers or Sir William are still at the scene of the crime after 20 minutes the police will arrive and they will proceed to ask a lot of awkward questions. If on the other hand the adventurers have joined forces with Sir William then they will be spotted fleeing the scene of the crime by a passerby.

10th September: A reward of £500 will be offered by Samuel Montague for the capture of the Ripper. Any strange behaviour by the adventurers will result in someone reporting them to the police as part of their routine enquiries. If the adventurers are staying with Sir William, they will be interviewed by Inspector Abberline. Otherwise they will be stopped in the street by Sergeant *'Johnny Upright'* Thicke.

22nd September: The adventurers will have traced the Vargr's passport to a drain beneath the streets of Whitechapel. If the adventurers investigate, they will find a smashed passport lying on the narrow shelf of a sewer, still giving out a signal. Beside it floating in the water, is a corpse (closer investigation will reveal it to be the decayed carcase of a pig from the market above).

30th September: The murder of Elizabeth Stride and Catherine Eddowes. If the adventurers are still free, and roaming the streets at night, they will spot the Varg entering the sewer near Mitre Square. Should they follow him, they will find themselves led to an old crypt, entered by a decaying tunnel from the sewer. Here they will find the corpses of males who have vanished over the month and the Vargr awaiting them, armed with a scalpel. The fight is on.

The murder of Mary Jane Kelly was committed by an agent of the Duke of Clarence after she became pregnant. This was done in a prevailing atmosphere of murder to cover up his own indiscretions. This murder would only be committed by the Varg if he escapes. There is a chance (12 on 2d6) that the murder of any local inhabitant of that period by the adventurers will result in a

change in the future, and they will be unable to return to the moment of departure, and must roam through time.

Victorian Atmosphere

In order to stretch your adventure out over the period needed by this scenario, great emphasis should be made of conditions at that time, the claustrophic streets full of beggars, urchins and thieves. The difficulty of obtaining money with jobs being low paid and long hours and the hard, exhausting working conditions, the differences in language and dialect (I gave my adventurers only a 35% chance of understanding Victorian English which I increased by 2% each day). The sexual restrictiveness which would cause female adventurers to stand out like a sore thumb amid the inhibited women of that time or identified as 'ladies of the night' The ever present weather; the infamous London fog that invaded all corners of the landscape, muffling noise, hiding death, creating fear and suspense. Certain cameos may be inserted into the scenario in order to provide red herrings or needed help.

If the characters are unable to find (or steal - note that the inhabitants of Whitechapel were very aware of robbers and dealt with those who stole from amid the poor inhabitants painfully and often permanently) money for food, one of them will be offered employment selling onions at Billingsgate to the fishermen (½d each) with everything made over a shilling being his own. Despite trekking for hours amid the milling crowds, and being pushed around he still has only made 4d when a beggar lying nearby will spot him and offer to take him to Blind Harry, king of the beggars where according to the beggar he would be taught how to beg, given food and a place to sleep in return for ten percent of whatever the character would make as a beggar - the offer sounds attractive and helpful. The beggar then proceeds to hobble down a dark alley towards an old house signalling all the time for the character to follow him. If the character does, he will find himself in a dark dead-end alley surrounded by six beggars armed with knives who want his clothing and any valuables (including his passport if he has it on him) or they'll cut him up bad . . . there is no way to escape except by going through them and they look spoiling for a fight.

Another way of supplying food and shelter is to allow them to fall in with one of the persecuted religious groups of that time, particularly if they are 'unusual' for that time (one of the characters in my game was of Arab-Negro extraction while another was a Vilani descendant from the blue-skinned Rmoahal race of lost Lemuaria) and are rejected by the society. I used the Mormons to provide shelter and free food since at that point of time there were more Mormon converts in Britain than in America (over 15000) and not only had suffered religious persection for the last fifty years but were prepared *and* due to the mass exodus to the salt lake basins had centres for the care of refugees in all the major seaports in Britain . . . The characters could be invited to partake of a free meal and to join them in service (if they refuse the service they will still be offered a free meal and a bed) as the meeting is about to begin the sound of a mob will be heard outside followed by stones being thrown through the windows glass cutting the faces of the children and women sheltering by the pulpit the crowd will then force the doors finally breaking them open and crushing a young Mormon Elder behind one of the doors. This will quieten the crowd down somewhat and attract the police who will investigate the crime and everyone involved including the Adventurers who will have to provide some evidence of identity and will be remembered by the police if they are detained again.

Weather Table

(throw twice a day to indicate how the weather will progress throughout the day)

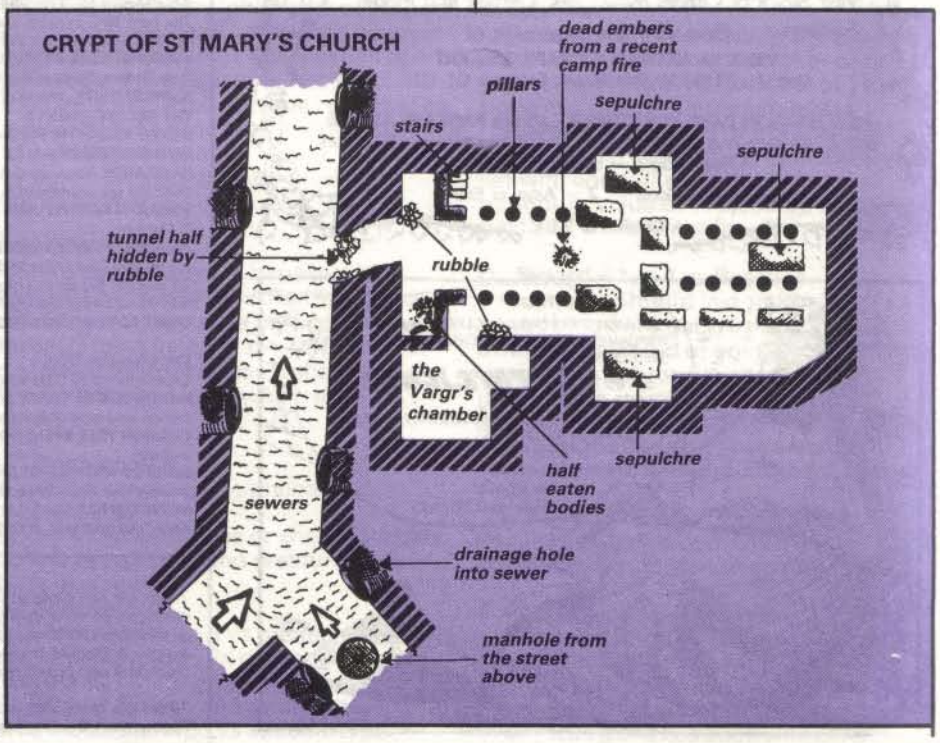
2	heavy rain
3	heavy rain
4	heavy rain
5	light rain
6	light rain
7	fog (heavy) visibility down to 1d10m
8	fog
9	fog visibility down to 1d10m
10	dull/overcast
11	dull/overcast
12	fine/clear skies

Final Notes

Some amusing problems arose for my own group while playing this scenario. After the team had arrived in Victorian England they found their passports (due to the inertial locators) pinging away because they were all switched on thus effectively blocking any signal that might come from the stolen passports, and also to avoid causing anymore attention to be focused on them, it was decided to switch off all but one of their own passports and hide them away out of sight.

This would have worked perfectly, allowing them to track the Vargr, except one of them failed to remember how to deactivate his and placed it inside his cloak where it proceeded to activate and warped out taking with it a large hole in both. Later after a couple of days without food or lodgings and with a few failed attempts to steal they witnessed an urchin trying to steal from a merchant. They decided to try and con the merchant into believing they were police, taking him for 'questioning' and rob him up a dark alley only to find their language difficulties leading to the merchant becoming suspicious and creating a hue and cry leading to them fleeing through the streets being chased by a large hostile crowd, unable to fight for fear of hurting one and thus changing their own time.

The fog was used to great advantage when two members of the team found themselves separated amid the fog-haunted streets and discovered that their locators started to ping away revealing what they thought was the insane and homocidal Vargr to be at the end of the street around a corner - it turned out to be each other. They both sighed relief until one switched his off only to be find that the locator was still pinging away revealing the signal coming from within a dark passage beside an old dog food shop at 29 Hanbury Street. Go out of your way to establish the sense of fear and you will be richly rewarded as I discovered when the characters finally went after Vargr down at the dank, wet filth covered sewers and found their torch being knocked into the water by a fleeing rat - trapped in a totally dark tunnel having to feel there way about with a killer ahead, or perhaps stalking them, what was that sound behind? An emptying drain or the Vargr? What was the heavy burden at their feet, wood or human bones? And that sudden noise from the corner, that sudden flash of light glinting of something, could it be a knife held ready to strike? As the referee you decide . . . imagination or death? If the Vargr is killed it is important that the adventurers either return with the body or else completely destroy it, else there is a chance that someone might find the corpse, deduce from the skeleton that alien life exists and has visited Earth thus changing history on the other hand if the modified hands and the feet are destroyed it might to the non-expert be merely the skeleton of a dog or wolf, but can the adventurer dare to take that risk? This adventure is only a stepping stone to greater and more spectacular journeys through space and time . . . good luck with future travels and time paradoxes. □



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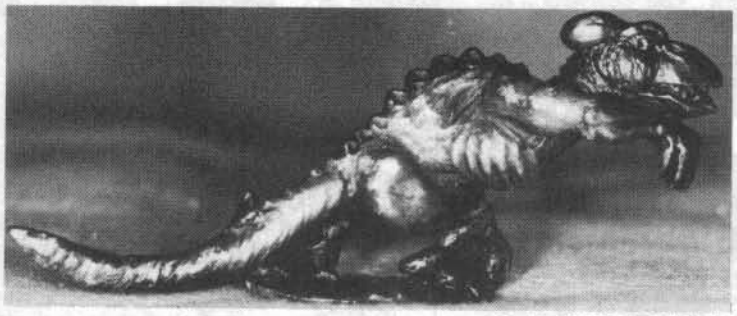

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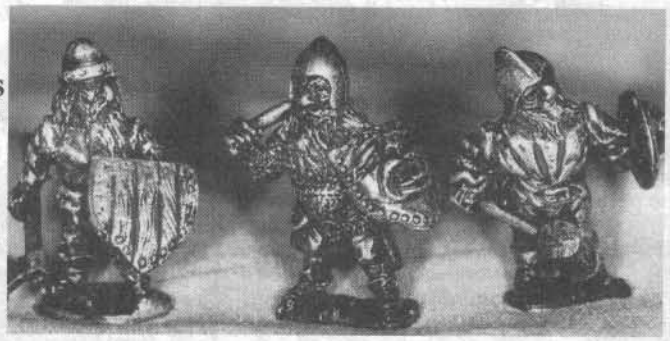

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Eye of Newt and Wing of Bat

The Manufacture of Magic Items in AD&D Part 4: Swords and Other Weapons

by Graeme Davis and Anthony R Allan

Swords present a unique problem in a work such as this, since they can, in some cases, effectively be three different magic items at the same time. Firstly the weapon itself, with its combat bonuses; secondly, any further abilities; and finally, in the case of an intelligent sword, there are special abilities to be considered, quite apart from the problems presented by a sentient magic item, per se.

Accordingly, the approach to this class of magic item is slightly different from that used in the other parts of this series. Magic swords are considered in four basic categories, as follows:

1. Battleswords. The simplest form of magic sword, with the straight-forward bonus to hit and damage.

2. Baneswords. in addition to basic combat bonuses, these have a particular 'enemy' against which their effectiveness is enhanced.

3. Spellswords. Swords which have some form of talismatic ability in addition to combat modifiers.

4. Spiritswords. Weapons whose manufacture has involved the conjuration of a summoned being into the metal of the weapon in order to provide it with certain abilities, and in some cases, with intelligence; it will be seen, however, that while intelligent swords are spiritswords, not all spiritswords are intelligent.

BATTLESWORDS

The first requirement for the creation of a battlesword, or indeed any other type of magic sword, is the manufacture of a non-magical weapon of high quality and fine workmanship. This will normally have to be undertaken by an NPC master swordsmith in the employment of the character undertaking the project. The cost of this stage of the operation is left to the individual DM, but a master craftsman will be extremely costly to employ for the length of time required; the base time for the production of an especially fine sword will be at least one month, and as explained below there is no guarantee that the first attempt will produce a weapon of sufficiently high quality for enchantment.

The chance of producing a blade of exceptional quality depends on the skill of the craftsman involved; this can modify the % roll for blade quality in Table 1 at the DM's discretion.

Table 1: Manufacture of Blades

% Roll	Blade Quality	% Roll	Blade Quality
0-5	Inferior	76-95	Superior
6-75	Average	96-00	Master

A blade of exceptional quality, worked in fine steel and honed to perfection, will accrue combat bonuses without any enchantment at this stage of the proceedings - weapons worked in metals such as mithril and adamantite will have a combat bonus even when the blade is only of average quality, and this bonus will naturally increase with blade quality. The practical effects of material and blade quality are shown below.

Table 2: Blade Quality and Material

Blade Quality	Material: Steel	Mithril	Adamantite
Inferior	−1	-	-
Average	-	+1	+2
Superior	+1	+2	+3
Master	+2	+3	+4

Weapons with a bonus of +5 or better can only be made by craftsmen of divine or semi-divine status, e.g. Giobhnie, Ptah, Hephaestus and possibly Ilmarinen.

The weapon is now ready for enchantment; for a simple battlesword, all that is required is a casting of *enchanted weapon* and *limited wish* once each for every 'plus' on the weapon (since *one* casting of *enchanted weapon* will make the sword the equivalent of +1 with regard to magically-protected monsters, the spell must be repeated as required, each time with a *limited wish* to gain the cumulative effect), followed by a *permanency* spell to finish the enchantment.

BANESWORDS

As explained above, a banesword is essentially a battlesword with enhanced effectiveness against a particular type of target. Those listed in the *DMG* can be divided into two classes, according to the battlesword from which they are derived:

+1 Baneswords

A. +2 vs magic-using/enchanted creatures
B. +3 vs lycanthropes or shapechangers
C. +3 vs regenerating creatures
D. +4 vs reptiles

+2 Baneswords

E. *Giant Slayer.* +3 vs giants, ettin, ogre magi or titan, 2x damage vs any true giant.
F. *Dragon Slayer.* +4 vs any true dragon, 3x damage vs specific type.

Note that *Flame Tongue* and *Frost Brand* are not Baneswords; their enhanced effectiveness against certain targets arises from their spell-like elemental powers.

The first requirement for the creation of a banesword is a battlesword with the requisite 'base' value shown below. The battlesword is manufactured largely as set down above, but because of the specific nature of the banesword there will be some slight complication of the process. Firstly, a special mixture will be needed for quenching the newly-forged blade, and secondly, it may be necessary to incorporate certain materials with latent magical virtue into the weapon - commonly as adornments to the hilt, guard and pommel.

A. Sword +1, +2 vs Magic-using and Enchanted Creatures

Quench: Should include 2oz ichor from a demon, type III or higher; 6 grains powdered lich skull; 1 pint criosphinx urine.

Materials: Star sapphire, chrysolite, malachite, olivine and peridot; gems and workmanship to a minimum value of 250,000gp.

B. Sword +1, +3 vs Lycanthropes and Shapechangers

Quench: Should include 1 dram of blood from each type of lycanthrope and shapechanger, drawn from the heart with a silver knife; 3 grains belladonna; 9 grains wolfsbane; 5 grains powdered silver; 1 pint of urine from any lycanthrope in human form.

Materials: The pommel-stone should consist of a moonstone, minimum value 500gp, which has been steeped in an infusion of wolfsbane for the passing of nine full moons, and then coated in pure silver. The whole should have a minimum value, in materials and workmanship, of 150,000 gp, and the blade itself should be inlaid with fine silver.

C. Sword +1, +3 vs Regenerating Creatures

Quench: Should include the whole blood of one lemure; ½pt ichor of any greater devil; finely diced liver of 1 troll; bone marrow of 1 lernaean hydra.

Materials: The hilt of the weapon should be carved from pit fiend horn and set with coral, the whole having a minimum value of 175,000 gp for materials and workmanship.

D. Sword +1, +4 vs Reptiles

Quench: Should include 2 pints mixed blood of a gecko, a lizardman and a huge ancient red or gold dragon, maintaining the appropriate proportions; 3 gills venom from any 12 species of poisonous snake; the brains and sinews of a mongoose and a snake-eating eagle, steeped in this mixture for at least 1 week.

Materials: The hilt of the weapon should be carved from the bone of an adult or older dragon of any type.

E. Sword +2, Giant Slayer

Quench: Should include 1 pint of blood and 2 drams of brain fluid from each giant type against which the sword is to have virtue, in which the diced heart of any true giant has been simmered for

at least 24 hours.

Material: The hilt should be carved from the shin-bone of any true giant, minimum value 150,000gp.

Other: After quenching, the sword should be treated with the essence of each true giant type in turn (ie earth, stone, ice, fire, steam and lightning) and then annealed over a fire of true giant's bones and viscera.

F. Sword +2 Dragon Slayer

A +2 battlesword should be treated as described above for a *Sword +4 vs Reptiles*; this is then treated with the essence of the named dragon type and the essence of its weakness (see *MM* p30 - eg for a bronze dragon treat with lightning and magical fire, for a red dragon treat with magical fire and earth/water or magical ice, etc). The weapon is then annealed over a fire of dragon bone, and quenched a second time in a fertile egg of the particular 'enemy' dragon type.

Spellcasting

Once the baneswords have been prepared as outlined above, they should be treated with the necessary spells to produce the 'base' battlesword, plus an extra *limited wish* to activate the magical potential resulting from the sword's special preparation.

SPELLSWORDS

These swords listed in the *DMG* which fall into the category of spellswords are as follows:

Sword +1, Flame Tongue; Sword +1, Luck Blade (1); *Sword +2, Nine Lives Stealer* (2); *Sword +3, Frost Brand; Sword +4, Defender* (1); *Sword +5, Defender* (1) *Sword +5, Holy Avenger* (1); *Sword of Dancing* (2); *Sword of Wounding* (1); *Sword of Life Stealing* (2); *Sword of Sharpness* (1); *Sword, Vorpal Weapon* (1); *Sword +1, Cursed* (2); *Sword −2, Cursed* (2); *Sword, Cursed Berserking* (1).

(1) The manufacture of these weapons is considered to be beyond the capabilities of player characters, mostly for reasons of game balance.

(2) The manufacture of these weapons can only be undertaken by spirit magic, as detailed under spiritswords (qv).

Sword +1, Flame Tongue

This sword can be manufactured by spirit magic involving the harnessing of a minor elemental (see spiritswords), but an unintelligent *Flame Tongue* can be manfactured from a +1 battlesword 'base' as follows:

The hilt should be set with a jacinth or fire opal of at least 1,000gp value, and worked in gold and platinum to a total value of materials and workmanship of at least 200,000gp.

When the enchantments come to be laid upon the sword, the following additional spells should be cast: *produce fire, limited wish* (x2), *geas*. The need for *produce fire* will necessitate the co-operation of a Druid, and although one of the additional *limited wishes* is soley directed towards meshing the two types of magic effectively, there is a 5% chance per level difference between the two spellcasters that the two magics will disrupt each other, with effects to be determined by the individual DM.

It is assumed in this rationalisation that the bonuses accrued by a *Flame Tongue* against various types of opponent are due entirely to the magical fire which is its main effect; if it is preferred to account for each bonus separately, the magical operations will become considerably more complex and hazardous.

Sword +3, Frost Brand

Most of the comments made above with respect to the *Flame Tongue* apply to the *Frost Brand* in a predictable mannner. An unintelligent *Frost Brand* can be manufactured from a +3 battlesword 'base' as follows: The hilt should be set with a diamond of at least 2,500gp value, and worked in silver and platinum to a minimum overall value for workmanship and materials of 300,000 gp.

The following additional spells should be used; *resist cold, cone of cold, limited wish* (x3). Because of the necessity for clerical spell use in the form of the *resist cold* spell, there is a chance of interference as set out above for the *Flame Tongue*. Again it is assumed here that the extra bonus and fire-extinguishing ability proceed from the cold-using nature of the sword rather than from specific separate enchantments.

SPIRITSWORDS

This fourth category of magical swords is the most difficult to define in precise terms, but also has a great deal of potential for the individual DM to develop.

The term spiritsword is given to any sword whose manufacture involves the summoning of some extra-planar creature such as a demon, devil or elemental, and its conjuration into the weapon in order to bestow it with intelligence, personality and special abilities.

As stated above, the manufacture of a *Flame Tongue* or *Frost Brand* sword could be accomplished by binding a fairly minor elemental to the prepared weapon, and in the case of intelligent weapons this is the only way in which they could be created. Similarly, an extra-planar being of some sort whose powers included energy drain could be bound to a sword in order to produce a *Sword of Life Stealing* - or a *Nine Lives Stealer* if there was a fixed agreement as to length of service - and perhaps a spirit whose abilities included *levitation* or *telekinesis* could be bound to a weapon to produce a *Dancing Sword.*

The nature of a successfully completed spiritsword will depend, obviously, on the nature of the spirit bound to the sword and upon the degree of control with which it is bound; too severe control could lead to the swamping of the spirit's own intelligence and abilities, while too little control would leave the spirit with very much a mind of its own, resulting in capricious use or misuse of the spiritsword's powers, or in extreme cases to a cursed sword, as the spirit seeks to hinder any who who would take advantage of its imprisonment in the sword.

There are two main methods of summoning extra-planar beings available to the average *AD&D* character; through spells such as *conjure elemental, cacodemon, monster summoning VII* and *gate*, or through the operation of various magic items, most of which are cursed. *Conjure elemental*, of course, allows absolute precision as to the nature of the summoned being, but the other methods are far less predictable. A *cacodemon* spell can conjure a demon of type IV-VI, provided the creature's name is known, and there is a high probability that it will not be friendly when it arrives. Also, at these levels there are limited numbers of each demon type, so that any prolonged operations, even is they were successful, could hardly escape the notice of some demon lord, who might feel compelled to investigate. *Monster summoning VII* has a 20% chance of providing the caster with a random low-medium power demon or devil, while *gate* may or may not supply anything at all, and the possibilities, in theory at least, range from a single type I to Asmodeus himself.

However the individual DM resolves the problem of summoning low-power spirits and minor elementals, judicious use of *Appendix D* of the *DMG* can provide an almost endless supply of such beings, each with its own unique powers and characteristics, which will ensure that every spiritsword created by high-level PCs or NPCs is practically unique. The characteristics of the weapon will not be known until the spirit has been successfully bound to it, and there is at least an even chance that these characteristics wil be the exact opposite of the desired effect. This unpredictability should appeal to the gambler in any archmage.

Having summoned the spirit, of course, the problem of gaining its co-operation and binding it to the weapon has still to be resolved; possible methods include a powerful *geas* or *suggestion*, or a slight variant of the *trap the soul* spell. This is left to the individual DM to decide in detail; a treatise in practical demonology is beyond the scope of this article.

It must be stressed, however, that once the spirit has been summoned and successfully bound the sword, the degree of freedom of action it is allowed is crucial to determining the extent of its intelligence and powers which may be manifested through the weapon. Therefore, the following simple system is

suggested. Once it has been determined that the summoned spirit has been controlled sufficiently to allow its binding to a sword, a roll should be made on the following 'double-chance' matrix to reflect the tightness of control and its effects on the spirits's freedom of action.

Table 3: Spirit Freedom

Ls-Le	None	Slight	Partial	Total
−10	01-99	00	-	-
−9	01-98	99-00	-	-
−8	01-96	97-00	-	-
−7	01-93	94-00	-	-
−6	01-89	90-00	-	-
−5	01-84	85-99	00	-
−4	01-78	79-98	99-00	-
−3	01-71	72-96	97-00	-
−2	01-64	65-93	94-00	-
−1	01-56	57-89	90-00	00
0	01-48	49-84	85-99	00
+1	01-40	41-78	79-98	99-00
+2	01-33	34-71	72-96	97-00
+3	01-26	27-64	65-93	94-00
+4	01-20	21-56	57-89	90-00
+5	01-15	16-48	49-84	85-00
+6	01-11	12-40	41-78	79-00
+7	01-08	09-33	34-71	72-00
+8	01-06	07-26	27-64	65-00
+9	01-05	06-20	21-56	57-00
+10	01-04	05-15	16-48	49-00

Where 'Ls' is the level of the summoner; 'Le' is the level of the summoned entity - treat as equivalent to HD, with +1 for every 2 extraordinary powers.

Degrees of Control

None: Indicates that the summoned entity has succeeded on the 'double chance', and is not co-operating. The summoner could have a fight on his hands.

Slight: Indicates that while the summoned entity has been bound to the weapon successfully, it still has a mind of its own to a great extent. (100-2d20)% of its intelligence will still be useable, as well as a like number of its abilities. The sword may well be wilful and/or difficult in the hands of a character whom it decides not to like, and may act as a cursed sword of some kind, using its abilities to interfere with its wielder's actions.

Partial: Indicates that the entity has been successfully bound to the weapon, retaining (30+2d20)% of its intelligence and abilities. While it is more or less reconciled to the idea of being a sword, it may behave erratically from time to time, and it will have a discernable personality.

Total: Again, a successful conjuration and binding is indicated, but the entity is under very restrictive control, which may sometimes be counter-productive.

It retains only 2d10% of its intelligence and abilities, and manifests very little in the way of its own personality. If the diced percentage is not sufficient to permit the use of one ability, the entity is assumed to be so tightly bound that it is helpless, and the sword is an ordinary non-intelligent type.

Notes: The retained intelligence of the spirit will be the net intelligence of the sword for the purposes of determining abilities (*DMG* p166, Table I). The abilities will, of course, be selected from the spirit's own repertoire. As intelligence decreases with tighter control, the more powerful abilities will become unusable first. The alignment of the sword will, of course be the alignment of the spirit. In those cases where the spirit has retained less than 12 intelligence, the sword will function exactly as if no spirit were bound to it, and will be possessed of no special abilities. There is a 10%/HD chance that the magical nature of the spirit will be reflected in an additional +1 to the sword, but otherwise the spirit will be helplessly bound within the weapon.

TYPES OF SPIRITSWORDS

Battleswords

A battlesword may be enhanced by the incorporation of a spirit, as described above. There is a chance that the binding of the spirit to a previously enchanted spellsword will create sufficient magical interference to break all the enchantments upon it, leaving a non-magical sword and a free spirit which will probably be none to well disposed towards its summoner. The chance of this interference occurring will vary according to circumstance, but for most purposes it can be equated with the magic resistance of the spirit concerned.

It may be possible to use a previously found non-intelligent battlesword rather than creating one specially, but the DM must take into account the danger of there being a totally-controlled spirit already in there - the chances of a shattered sword and two aggressive free spirits are high under such circumstances.

Baneswords

The question of spirit baneswords may be approached in two ways: a banesword may be prepared as detailed previously, and a spirit bound to it in the same way as outlined for battleswords, or a spirit may be selected, if possible, for its elemental nature or known antipathies, and bound to a sword to produce a banesword after its own inclinations. In both cases, the risks are the same as for producing spirit battleswords.

Spellswords

All spellswords are, of necessity, spiritswords, and their abilities depend entirely on the spirit in question. Again, a non-intelligent battlesword should be produced, and the binding carries the usual risks.

Miscellaneous Weapons

The same treatment used above for swords can be applied to other weapons successfully, and opens up another range of possibilities with regard to spirit magic - after all, why should swords have the monopoly on intelligence? An intelligent mace, flail or axe is just as reasonable, although the DM must be careful over the range of weapons which may possess intelligence - intelligent sling bullets of *Life Stealing*, for example, lack credibility, and as a rule of thumb we suggest that a weapon should have a minimum of 10gp weight of metal, plus 1gp/HD of the spirit to be cast into it.

The weapons in the miscellaneous weapons table of the *DMG* are dealt with below;

Battleweapons

Arrow, +1; Arrow, +2; Arrow +3; Axe, +1; Axe, +2; Axe, +3; Axe, throwing, +2; Battleaxe, +1; Bolt, +2; Bow, +1 (3); Crossbow of Accuracy; Crossbow of Distance; Dagger, +1; Dagger, +2; Flail, +1; Hammer, +1; Hammer, +2; Javelin, +2; Mace, +1; Mace, +2; Mace, +4; Military Pick, +1 Morning Star, +1; Scimitar, +2; Sling, +2; Spear, +1; Spear, +2; Spear, +3.

Spellweapons/Spiritweapons

Crossbow of Speed; Hammer +3; Dwarven Thrower (1); *Hammer of Thunderbolts* (1); *Mace of Disruption* (1); *Spear, Cursed Backbiter* (2); *Javelin of Lightning; Javelin of Piercing* (1); *Trident of Fish Command* (1); *Trident of Submission* (2); *Trident of Yearning* (2); *Trident of Warning.*

(1) These weapons are beyond PC capabilities.

(2) These weapons can only be manufactured by spirit magic.

(3) This weapon is manufactured in a slightly different way from the others, but the principles should be clear.

Description of Spellweapons

Crossbow of Speed

This is essentially a +1 battleweapon, upon which the following additional spells have been cast; *animate object, geas, limited wish* (*x2*). The normal risks of mixing clerical and magical spell use apply.

Javelin of Lightning

This has not been prepared in the way of normal battleweapons, as it has no attack or damage bonus. The shaft of the weapon is made from the trunk of a lightning-struck ash tree, and the head of a volt stinger coated in pure copper. Upon this the following spells are cast: *enchant an item, enchanted weapon* (x2), *limited wish* (x3), *lightning bolt, geas.*

Trident of Warning

This trident is a +2 battleweapon, a section of whose shaft is prepared in the same way as a *Wand of Enemy Detection* (qv); in addition to the spells for both items, an additional full *wish* is necessary to prevent the two magics interfering once the item is assembled.

Other Weapons

Dagger of Venom

There seems to be no reason to believe that this item is anything other than mechanical; it seems to be on the magic tables purely to restrict its availablity.

Trident (Military Fork) +3

This would be a standard +3 battleweapon if it were not for the apparent mechanical device which changes its form. While such a combination of magic and mechanics is uncommon, there is no reason to discuss the magical side of its preparation any further.□

Next issue: Miscellaneous Magic and Conclusions.

Fiend Factory *is a regular department for readers'* D&D *monsters. This issue . . .*

O CABER

by John Chapman

BACKGROUND

Many centuries ago upon what was known locally as Pine Isle, the archdruid Lamorsta created the Nyim O Caber. He released the life-spirits of some of the pine trees which adorned his island. They assumed superbly graceful bodies, which are a direct reflection of their souls.

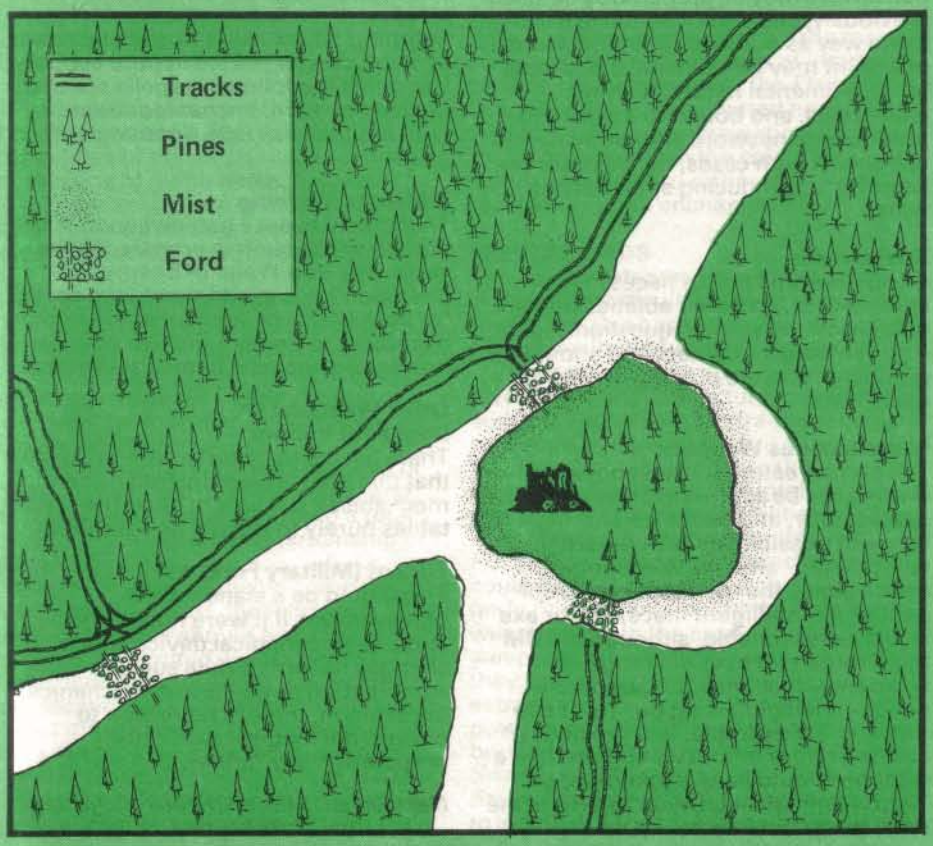
Unfortunately these were mute, mindless servants who could only obey the simplest of commands. He found their calm, peaceful faces comforting but he needed to make them 'live'. This compulsion became an obsession but, after only a couple of decades, he released the Sodger O Caber. These took the form of five males who could think for themselves, but were totally loyal to Lamorsta. They kept him company and gave him great satisfaction and pleasure for many years.

However, as the years passed, Lamorsta began to get restless as he realised that they were not perfect. He gathered his powers together and attempted to release the Great Pine, which had stood next to his home all his life. The life-spirit appeared as a beautiful woman, who possessed a remarkable intelligence and sense of life. He called her Mandryna, Quean O Caber.

Lamorsta began to teach her the secrets of his work. She quickly acquired knowledge and skills from her studies of his grimoires and tomes. Mandryna knew, however, that he was dying due to old age and illness. When he did eventually die after a few years of confinement to his house, he left all of his belongings and scripts to Mandryna.

She has reached a reasonable level of mastery and she will, of course, continue to improve. Mandryna, the Sodger and the Nyim are all now immortal and ageless. She has improved them to what they are now, and has made the Sodger into her five officers and closest companions. The Nyim and the Sodger are totally loyal to her, by respect and love rather than fear or bribery. The Nyim now number approximately three hundred.

Mandryna has no grudge or evil intent against any race, although the Nyim are sometimes sent abroad to gain or retrieve, without bloodshed, some items or scripts to help Mandryna in her studies. Their lives are based on freedom but, being on their island, this does not affect anyone else. They will never press their ideals upon others, and subsequently they will never be corrupted away from their style of life.



NYIM O CABER

No Appearing:	3 - 18
Armour Class:	2
Movement:	12" - 15"
Hit Dice:	3d8+3 - 6d8+3
Treasure:	See below
Attack:	2 fists for 2 - 5 each or by weapon type.
Alignment:	Neutral good
Intelligence:	Highly

The Nyim, known amongst themselves as pine brothers, are a very rare and extraordinary race.

They are quick, graceful demi-humans of a somewhat elven appearance. Standing at 6' tall, their skin has a smooth, sculptured look. This is of a pale green hue which is constant over their bodies. Fine, ivory coloured hair, with a slight tint of green, frames their faces, and their almond-shaped eyes are of a cold, emerald nature which completes their curious elvish mien.

Their bodies are not of flesh but wood with clear sap running through their veins instead of blood. The wood acts like flesh, except that it is harder and smoother but just as supple; and that it absorbs sunlight and oxygen to sustain their energy. They can keep going for a week without either of these two commodities, but from then on they lose one point of Constitution per day.

They should be treated as Constitution 16, and Dexterity 17. Due to their magical background, they gain +2 on all magic based saving throws.

A sleeveless tabard made of a fibrous material is their only item of clothing, but these vary depending on the individual. For weapons they use a long bow and a light sabre. All of these are made from a unique type of hardened wood, which is of some value to alchemists.

Although the Nyim are basically fighters, they do have the ability to regenerate 5HP/turn, or to regenerate 5HP/round if they are in physical contact with a pine tree; to Hide in Woodland 75%, and add 15% if they are in a pine forest. They do, however, suffer double damage from normal fire (not magical fire), due to their physical composition. Instead of food, they drink a mixture of water and fine loam dust.

They are highly intelligent and very cunning, and they will always try to preserve their life whenever possible, without betraying Mandryna or causing innocents to die. They have, on occasions, shown a dislike for ugly and cruel creatures but this is very rarely acted upon. If it is at all possible, they generally perfer to move unseen rather than to attract attention. To help them do this, all the woodland creatures, especially wood elves, will help them whenever possible.

SODGER O CABER

No Appearing:	1-5
Armour Class:	0
Movement:	17"
Hit Dice:	10d8+3
Treasure:	See below
Attack:	2 fists for 1-6 each or by weapon type.
Alignment:	Neutral good
Intelligence:	Exceptional

The appearance of the Sodger is similar to that of the Nyim, except that they are slightly taller.

Their faces and manner have an air of persuasiveness and are very charming. They should be treated as Charisma 16 and when this is combined with their exceptional intelligence then they can be very convincing. Their other important characteristics are Dexterity 17, Strength 14 and Constitution 17. They gain +4 on magic based saving throws, whilst gaining +2 on all other throws. As per the Nyim, they also suffer double damage from normal fires.

It is extremely rare for a Sodger to be abroad from Pine Island alone, and virtually unheard of that more than one should be encountered in a foreign land. They are usually riding upon a dark green horse, which can be treated as a nightmare in most respects. The longbows which they carry are +1 and they use heavy scimitars (d10) in melee.

As well as their fighting abilities and those mentioned for the Nyim, they also possess a limited spell capability. Apart from those listed on the table, they can cast *protection from fire* twice a day as per 10th level druid, and *affect normal fires* once per day with thrice the normal effect.

The only valuable item which the Sodger own and carry with them, is the 'Isle Star'. It is a large emerald, 2,000gp, which has been enchanted by Mandryna. The gem allows the Sodger to communicate telepathically with Mandryna at will, but this is not the most important function. If the Sodger are in dire straits and face losing their own or the Nyim's lives then they use the 'Isle Star'. Upon calling out the command, the Sodger and his horse (with his possessions) will lose substance and vanish. In their place will be a thick mass of rapidly expanding fog. This moves outwards until it covers an area of 300 square yards in 5 rounds, and any creature will have their visibility cut to 10'.

The Sodger have actually teleported back to Pine Island, whilst the Nyim are given the fog cover, which lasts for 8 turns, to make their escape. This is definitely a last resort unless they were on their way back home anyway.

MANDRYNA, QUEAN O CABER

No Appearing:	1
Armour Class:	−3
Movement:	20"
Hit Dice:	87 hit points
Treasure:	See below
Attack:	2 claws for 2-7 each or by weapon or by spell type.
Alignment:	Neutral good
Intelligence:	Genius

Mandryna is a carefree model of pure feminine beauty. Her skin is of the softest, palest hue of green with full, waist length ivory hair. Her heart shaped elven face curves her mouth into an innocent simile, which is accentuated by her warm green eyes. This youthful body is clad in an emerald satin and sparkle garment. Hung about her shoulders is a shimmering cloak which flows about her as if it possessed an essence of life itself.

However, underneath his beautiful exterior is a tremendously intelligent woman, but one who is possessed by such a sensitivity for life, that many people often forget this when they are in her presence. Due to her appearance and personality she can *charm* to such a degree that the victim saves −6. She does, however, only use this against people who pose a positive threat, rather than just trying to get her own way. This is because she respects the individuals choice to choose.

Intelligence is of course her prime ability, but should she also be treated as 18 in Wisdom and Dexterity, with her Charisma at 19.

She carries with her a long, slender javelin of pine wood. This is the equivalent of a *Javelin of Piercing* [*DMG*], except that it returns to her hand (only) and is therefore permanently enchanted. The fastening on her cloak is a *Brooch of Shielding* [*DMG*] which protects her from all magically or non-magically propelled fire.

As well as the spells shown and those of the Sodger, she can cause *neutralize poison* by touch, and is thus immune to poison herself. Her last resort ability is that she can *teleport*, at will, back to Pine Isle or anywhere around the island without error.

	Druidic Spells		Magic			Languages
	1	2	3	4	5	Resistance	
Nyim	-	-	-	-	-	Standard	Woodland
Sodger	3	2	1	-	-	Standard	Major Races
Mandryna	5	4	3	2	1	75%	All

NOTES

1) The oringinal idea for the physical features of the Nyim came from M Moorcock's 'The Bull and the Spear'.
2) If any DM uses these characters as NPC's, then they could never be successfully used in a 'hack and slay' campaign.
3) Pine Isle is constantly shrouded in mist and is impossible to find unless Mandryna wants you to.
4) The names of the Nyim and the Sodger are the same in the plural and the singular form.

Scenario Ideas

1. The adventurers are engaged by a local timber-merchant to protect his wood-cutters who have been attacked recently in the area of Pine Island. Not surprisingly Mandryna has tried, and failed to scare the wood cutters-off. An unfortunate accident left two of the humans dead. The timber merchant frightened of losing his work force has hired fighters to guard the men while they work. It would be interesting to see the partys reaction when they meet any of the O Caber clan, and realise their peaceful intentions.

2) For some time the river boat men have wished to establish a jetty and warehouse along this stretch of the river. They know vaguely of the legends, but do not pay heed to any warnings, the party could either be employed as river boat guards, or simply be innocent passengers passing through the area.

3) Hired by a notable alchemist the party are engaged to accompany him to rediscover the ruins of the archdruid Lamorsta, where he hopes to find and take any remains of his research.

All of these scenario suggestions will give the party a great crisis of conscience, whether to honour their contract with their employer and so assist in the destruction of this peaceful enclave, or help the O Caber to become 'invisible' again to civilisation.

The fact that Pine Island is shrouded in mist, can be used to advantage. In the river boat scenario the party's vessel could run aground on the island. Otherwise a long and involved systematic search would have to be undertaken to even find the fords.□.

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HERMITS AND HAGS

by John Grandidge

HERMITS

Malcontents who have for one reason or another decided to abandon the hustle and bustle of the city and gone to the wilderness to live in solitude, have often found that self-sufficiency is not all that easy. Many hermits will be suffering from vitamin deficiencies and appear ill-kempt, hairy and smelly. This includes those pious individuals who go out into the wilderness seeking enlightenment for the best of purposes just as much as those with physical or mental deformities who seek to escape the ridicule of their fellow beings. Although pathetic and often nauseating, hermits may have good knowledge of the surrounding wilderness (its geography and denizens) and a few have picked up useful herbal arts. Getting them to impart knowledge or help can be extremely difficult, as they generally resent contact with humanity.

Only rarely do members of character classes (such as magic-users, clerics and druids) seek solitude since they are generally powerful folk compared to the 0th level morass of humanity. Occasionally, such high level types may venture forth for some specific purpose, but even then they would not conform to the Hermits detailed here and should be treated entirely separately by the DM. Low levellers on the other hand, when forced to hermitude by terrible events (eg political exile) can sink to depravity and come to conform to the hermits of this article. Monks particularly frequently become hermits, testing themselves against nature.

All alignments are possible, especially for the character class-types, but life in the wilderness will gradually errode any feelings of altruism towards other people unless the hermit is especially strong-willed and so Neutrality will predominate.

Powers/Abilities

41-60% Knowledge of wilderness (similar to beggars' knowledge of city)
01-20% Knowledge of local legends, superstitions.
20% chance to be a character class; roll d20

1-4	:	Cleric, level 1
5-8	:	Magic User, level 1
9-12	:	Fighter, level 1-3
13-20	:	Monk, level 1-6

01-20% Knowledge of herbs. Roll Knowledge % and then check each of the following herbs to see if the hermit knows how to make the requisite potion.

Tonic (curses 2-8 hit points once per person per day); *Stimulant* (as *Remove Fear* spell cast by 4th level cleric); *Resist Cold*; *Resist Fire*; *Neutralise poison**; *Cure Disease*; *Paralysis* (as *Feign Dead* spell on drinker); *Suggestion* (on drinker); *Charm* (as if cast upon drinkers love potion to op. sex); speed; poison; strength.

Generally, herbal poisons require several ingredients to be boiled up in a cauldron. The effects of a potion of this sort last only d4 turns (with the exceptions of *Charm*, *Tonic*, *Neutralise Poison*, *Cure disease* and *Poison*).

*Note that *Neutralise Poison* and *Cure Disease* are not magical cure-alls. A hermit (or hag) has a knowledge % roll to know the antidote/cure for any one type of poison or disease. Whenever a new disease/poison is encountered the hermit/hag may check again to see if they can remedy it.

HAGS

Hags have brooded upon their misfortunes and have made hideous pacts with evil beings of other planes in order to gain revenge on, or power over, cruel humanity. If they please their masters by spreading much evil and suffering amongst men, they may well eventually rise to considerable powers. It is recommended that the DM specifically detail any high level hags existing in his campaign.

Hags have an uncanny amount of knowledge, gained from their diabolic/demonic masters. Whilst they may give useful information for a bribe of magic or money they will always seek to temper the information so as to bring maximum suffering to innocents. Examples of the types of things that hags are likely to know about include details of monsters' weaknesses and abilities, local legends and location of supernatural entities in the neighbourhood.

All hags have the power of *Conditional Cursing*. Such a curse can be cast upon any one person within 50yds, casting time 5 segments, verbal components only, its duration being equal to one generation per level of the Hag. The condition of the curse can be anything the hag wants, spoken aloud as the spell is cast. Until the condition is fulfilled, the curse lies dormant (but cast) and cannot be removed except by *wish*. The curse takes instant effect, no saving throw, when the condition is fulfilled; the hag's patron (ie the DM) deciding what exact form it shall take. Examples of curses range from lowering saves to poison by 4 to turning the unfortunate victim (and subsequent family) into a were-spider every full moon (the latter should be only possible for a high level hag). Once active, the curse may be removed by a *Remove Curse* cast by a cleric of at least three times the level of experience of the casting hag. Hags may only cast one *Conditional Curse* per month.

Hags are invariably either Chronic or Neutral evil.

Powers/Abilities:
(A randomly encountered hag should be only 1st-4th level.)

Level	Hit die (d4)	Abilities (fight and save as magic-users)
1	1	Knowledge: Herbs 21-40% (see Hermit for details) Wilderness 41-60% Legends etc. 21-40%
2	2	Find familiar spell. +10% to all Knowledge skills.
3	3	+10% to Herbs Knowledge.
4	4	10% to both Herbs and Legends Knowledge, Starts spell abilities as 1st level illusionist.*
5	5	Spells as 2nd level illusionist.
6		Spells as 3rd level illusionist.
7+	6+ per level	+1 level of illusionist ability per level, up to maximum of 7th level of proficiency.

* Hags spell lists are identical with those of illusionists except for the inclusion of *Charm Person* as a first level spell and at third level: *Fly* (using broomstick only); *Clairvoyance*; and *Augury*.

Example of a hag: The (adapted) Tale of the Worm of Lampton

A young gallant knight returned from the Crusades to find his lands of Lampton menaced by a massive, slimy monstrosity; the Worm. Upon hearing that all the other brave men who had attacked it had become fish bait, our hero resolved to risk a visit to a well-known and powerful hag of his lands.

'To kill the Worm, you must wear spiked armour doused in the poison I have given you. If you do not kill the first thing that you recognise after the Worm is dead, my curse shall fall upon you for seven generations.'

'Then the pair dissloved into a pool of scarlet and orange jelly that formed many mouths, cackling maniacally in an ascending cacophany as I ran from the hoary hut, screaming!'

The knight did indeed kill the Worm easily as it impaled itself on his armour as it tried to crush him. He had arranged for his dog to be released as soon as he blew his horn upon victory, so that he could kill that, but his old father rushed out to congratulate his son and saw him before the dog. The young lord killed his dog anyway, but the fates were not deceived and he and his family were cursed for seven generations.

	Hermits	Hags
1-3	Courteous, servile	Antagonistic
4	Saintly	Aloof/Uncaring
5-9	Aloof/Uncaring	Grumpy, Morose
10-4	Rude	Rude
15-18	Antagonistic	Friendly/Servile
19-20	Insane*	Insane*

* Insanity: roll as per *DMGP*83. Then roll apparent disposition again - insanity only being obviously apparent if rolled again. □

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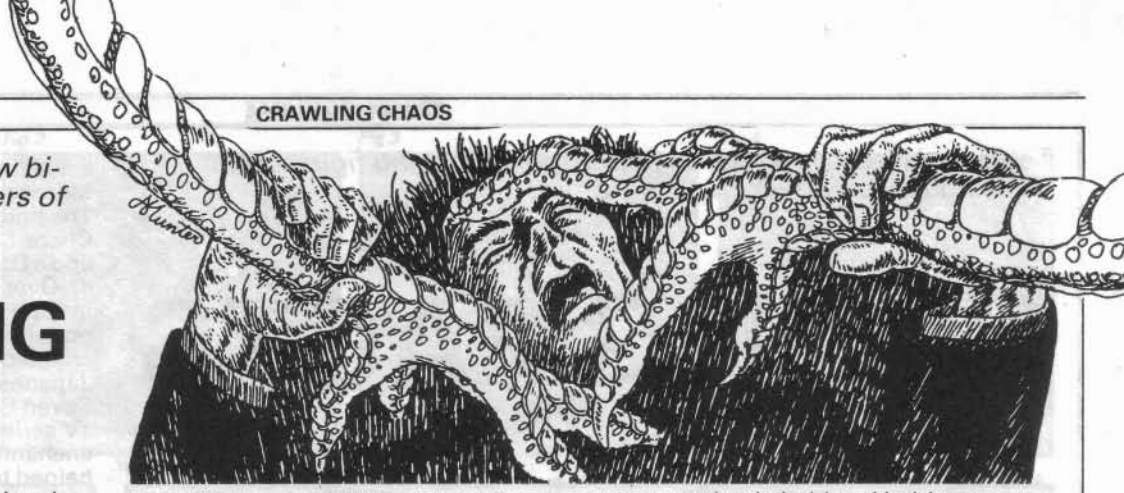
Crawling Chaos *is our new bi-monthly column for players of* Call of Cthulhu, *edited by Marc Gascoigne.*

CRAWLING CHAOS



Extending a scaly hand in greeting, I would like to welcome you to *Crawling Chaos,* a column devoted to *Call of Cthulhu,* the role-playing game inspired by the horror stories of H P Lovecraft. The few scenarios *White Dwarf* has published for the game in recent issues have proved immensely popular, and public demand for more has produced this column.

Call of Cthulhu is quite different to write for, though, when compared to the average Fantasy or SF rolegame. In a typical *CoC* adventure, the players go through a set of very creepy investigations, never quite sure what is waiting for them at the end of it all, only knowing they must solve the mystery they have been presented with, before it leaps out and massacres them. This sense of anticipation, and of the dreadful inevitable ending common to many adventures lends the game a quite extraordinary atmosphere. As a result, much more effort than usual needs to be put into the creation of a plausible background.

The 'Sourcebook For the 1920s' which comes with the game is adequate as far it goes, but there is more that could be useful, for different time periods. The forthcoming British sourcepack, *Green and Pleasant Land,* will cover many areas, and I will hopefully be previewing some of it in this column. Historical aspects, including famous archaeological sites, haunted houses, and more mundane aspects like modes of travel, or British firearms, and so on are obvious choices. But what about the wealth of British legends and folk tales that have never been explained? There are many famous people and organisations from the Victorian and Edwardian periods, from scientists and authors to mystics and political groups - was Cthulhu behind any of these? Tell us.

This does not mean, of course, that we will be neglecting, in any way whatsoever, the central aspect of the game - the nasties! I would think there are probably enough Greater Gods (prove me wrong!), but there is plenty of room for more lesser beings - the independant and servitor races. Even more deadly sometimes are the human cultists; with their weird rituals, secret initiation rites, and cult artifacts, they can be very interesting, and useful too.

To whet your appetite for what is to come, here are two emminently usable new minor races. Both will only be encountered on the British mainland. They have been adapted by Peter Gilham, from Brian Lumley's Cthulhu mythos novel *Beneath The Moors.*

BOKRUG (Lesser Independant Race)

STR: 3d6+6
CON: 3d6
SIZ: 3d6+6
INT: 3d6+6
POW: 2d6+6
DEX: 3d6
Hit Points: 13-14 average
Move: 7
Claw: (2d6), 55%
Touch: Paralysis (see below), 75%
Armour: 3 point scaled hide.
Spells: Bokrug who roll under POWx3 know 1d3 spells.
SAN: Seeing a Bokrug costs 1d6 SAN points. A successful SAN roll indicates that there is no loss.

Description: *'They walked upright but they were almost like, well - crocodiles!* - but with humanish faces! They had short tails and they were green.'
- Beneath The Moors, by Brian Lumley.

Notes: The Bokrug are an alien race who migrated to our world thousands of years ago with the Thuun'ha, their servants and worshippers, when their own planet was dying. Together they built the city of Ib in the ancient land of Muar, and its sister city Ih'yib, beneath what are now the Yorkshire Moors in northern England. Ib and its inhabitants were destroyed by the men of Sarnath the Doomed centuries ago, but Ih'yib still exists, hidden from mankind.

When the Bokrug first arrived on Earth, they possessed an advanced technology. This has decayed, but they have discovered some of the Old Ones' shoggoth-matter. They have developed this for their own obscure purposes, using it mostly to create microscopic light-emitting organisms, which are trained to follow creatures like a halo of fire-flies.

The Bokrug's life cycle is quite complicated. At two points in it, they pass through a stage in their development when they resemble humans. When born, Bokrug can pass for human babies, and are left in the surface world, to be reared as orphans. At twenty-one however, they begin to revert to reptilian form, and develop a longing to return to Ih'yib. Many, however, do not make this return journey. Some are confined to institutions by this stage; others are outcasts, living a hermit-like life far away from civilisation; and a few, believing themselves perhaps to be Deep Ones, go to live with these creatures in their undersea cities. The second change to human form occurs much later in their lives, around the age of forty. Bokrug do not retain the hair they lost when they first changed into their true form, and are completely bald and hairless.

Adult Bokrug attack with their claws, or by inducing paralysis in their victims. This is triggered by touch, but seems to be generated by the mind. Anyone attacked in this manner must roll under POWx2 or be unable to move or even speak. Only automatic functions like breathing are retained. Every subsequent ten minutes, the victim may attempt to regain their senses, by rolling under POW as a percentage. Each attempted use of this power costs the Bokrug 2 magic points.

THUUN'HA (Lesser Servitor Race)

STR: 2d6
CON: 3d6
SIZ: 1d6+3
INT: 2d6+3
POW: 3d6
DEX: 2d6+6
Hit Points: 8-9 average
Move: 8
Armour: none
Claw: (1d4), 35%
Spells: none
SAN: Failing a SAN roll results in the loss of 1d6 points, A successful roll indicates that there is no loss.

Description: *'The Thuun'ha were hideous, and no other word could adequately fit them. Perhaps four and one half feet tall, green as Yorkshire beer bottles, bulge-eyed with flabbily hanging, wattled and strangely tapering, furred ears . . .hideous!'* - Beneath The Moors, by Brian Lumley

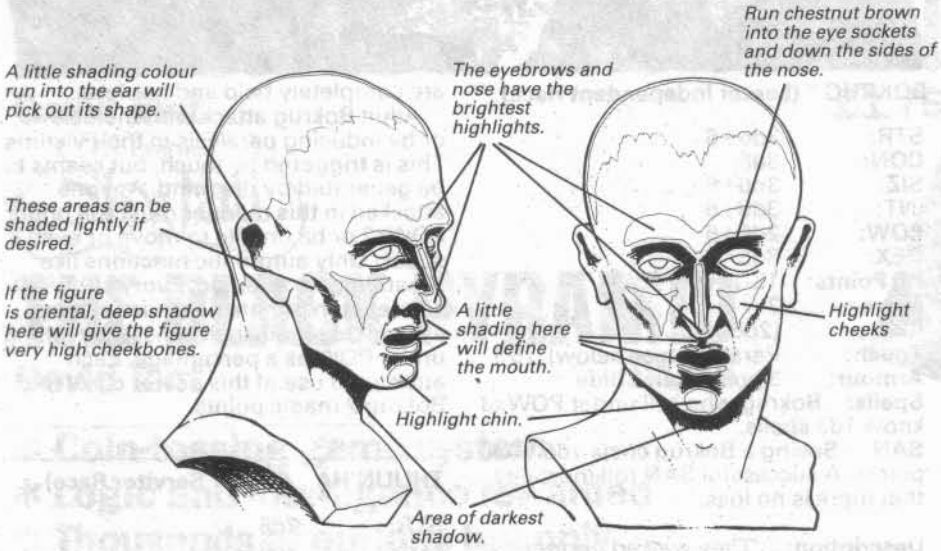
Notes: The Thuun'ha worship the image of Bokrug the Water Lizard. They came to Earth with their gods, and built Ib and Ih'yib for them. Because of the destruction of the former by the men of Sarnath, they hate all humankind, and will kill them unless countermanded by a Bokrug. The only living Thuun'ha live in Ih'yib under the Yorkshire Moors.

The life cycle of these creatures is similar to that of the frog, with the young being born inside a frogspawn-like jelly. Once born, they grow swiftly to adulthood, under the very protective care of the older creatures. Thuun'ha are mute, communicating via a limited form of telepathy. Even the spawning young can transmit emotions by this method.

Because of the nature of their home planet, these creatures must breathe a peculiar gas for a short while each day. The gas is poisonous to humans (having a potency of 2d6), but if denied it the Thuun'ha lose 1d3 points of CON per day until they die. Thuun'ha attack with two claws per round.□

Tabletop Heroes *is a regular department covering figures and painting by Joe Dever and Gary Chalk.*

FACING FACTS



There is one specific part of a miniature where, if you spend a relatively small amount of time on shading and highlighting, you can bestow upon it a distinctive 'character'. That specific part is the face.

The art of painting faces is a simple skill which can, with a little practice, be mastered very quickly. Basic flesh 'pink' colour is obtained by mixing red, yellow and white. Commercially available flesh colour tends to be far too pale. To test a flesh-coloured paint, try a small dab on the back of your hand: the paint should appear orangy in comparison to your skin; if not, add red and yellow to suit. The face of a figure is so small that the colouring has to be exaggerated to appear healthy. Pale flesh colour makes a figure look decidely ill, and therefore, flesh 'straight-from-the-tin' should only be used if anaemia is the desired effect. The diagrams below show the areas of a face that need shading and highlighting in order to produce 'character'. Shading is performed first, enabling you to hide any overspill that may occur when you come to apply the hightlights later. Shade using chestnut brown thinned down to a runny transparent wash. This transparency is important; for the best results we suggest you use acrylics (*Tamiya* Hull Red XF-9 is ideal), although satisfactory results can be obtained with enamels (*Humbrol* MC22 or HN5 in particular). Using a double 0 or treble 0 size brush, charge the bristles with thinned chestnut brown and apply it to the shaded areas, as shown in the diagram. On a well-cast miniature, the paint will run into the recesses to form its own shading; on a less detailed figure, paint in the shade lines where the recesses should be. Once the shading has dried, shadows can be deepened by repeating the process. The highlighting colour can be made by adding white to your basic flesh mix. Ready-mixed flesh colour is often ideal as a highlighter and in this instance it can be used straight from the tin. This highlight should not be thinned, as the more opaque it is, the more effective and striking will be the result. Apply the highlight to the areas shown in the diagram and you will see a marked change.

Eyes are best added as a thin line of dark brown; in many cases the chestnut brown wash should be sufficient to define the eye, but if you want to have a stab at painting white eyeballs with dot pupils - take care! The bigger the eyeball, the more surprised or terrified a figure will appear. In most instances this detail is unnecessary. Take at look at some photographs of people where their bodies are no larger than 25mm high. It is unlikely that any of the eye will be discernible.

Complexion can be enhanced with a little thinned red, washed over the cheeks, but again - take care! A face with bright red cheeks can look apoplectic or comical. Lips can be tinted red (especially effective on female characters) but lavender is a more authentic shade to use.

The techniques of shading and highlighting faces can be applied with equal success to other areas of the body. For the faces of 'non-white' characters, substitute the basic 'flesh pink' for the equivalent basic skin tone of the appropriate race you wish to depict, as follows:
NEGROID: Deep Brown (*Humbrol* MC6 mixed with a little matt black)
ASIAN: Olive Brown (*Humbrol* MC24 with MC21)
ORIENTAL: 'European' flesh mixed with a little pale yellow

This Month's Photographs

The *Oriental Heroes* [*Citadel CO5*] shown in *Figs 1* to *4*, showcase the considerable talents of their designer Ali Morrison, and the artist John Blanche. The figures are a Female Bushi (*Fig 1*), a Chaos Samurai (*Fig 2*), a Ronin (*Fig 3*), and a Daimyo: a feudal samurai lord (Fig 4). Over the last three years, adventures in Nippon have steadily grown in popularity. Much of this growth can be credited to the popularization of Japanese history. Films such as 'The Seven Samurai' and 'Kagemusha', the TV series of 'Shogun', and the enchanting 'Monkey' stories, have all helped to capture the imaginations of western role-players. If you'd like to try rolegaming in the colourful milieu of feudal Japan, then checkout *Bushido*, easily the best RPG rules for this period currently available. *Dixon Miniatures* also produce an exhaustive range of 25mm Samurai.

Fig 5 shows a *Platoon 20* door gunner glued into a *Tamiya* 'Huey' chopper. *Platoon 20* produce a large catalogue of 20mm 'modern scenario' figures, ideal for use in RPG's such as *Recon* (Vietnam), *Merc* (modern mercenary), *James Bond 007, Top Secret* and *Aftermath*.

Fig 6 shows a *Platoon 20* M13 troop carrier deploying a patrol of US marines. The bamboo hut and shanty are part of an extensive range of African/Asian dwellings by *Akheton Fortifications*. The palm trees shown in the background were made by winding string around pieces of coat-hanger wire. The palm leaves were cut from green silk, the centres being strengthened with 5 amp fuse wire.

Fig 7 shows a few of our figures engaged in a practical playtest of the new *Warhammer 2* rules. The part of the evil horde was played by a wide and varied cast of goblinoids and reptilians. Figures by *Chronicle, Citadel, Asgard* and *Essex* make up the bulk of the attackers, with many conversions and older (and sadly defunct) ranges sprinkled among them. The *Chronicle* shaman (stage centre) is making quite an impression on the luckless defenders with the aid of a simple card cone, painted to depict the effect of a flame spell. Markers such as this can be a practical aid to any games master - templates for spell effects speed up play, reduce arguments and, if prepared with a little care, look very impressive. Convincing flame effects can be obtained by dying cotton wool with concentrated water colours. The explosion on the fortress steps is cotton wool dyed red, yellow and black and teased out to stimulate a blast; it adds a new dimension to destructive magic. The fortress itself was constructed from polystyrene ceiling tiles and cork, as outlined in our article *Under Siege* [*WD53*]. This photograph, together with a print of John Blanche's *Warhammer 2* artwork, is available as a full colour wall poster (420mm x 600mm) from *Citadel Miniatures* (£2.95 for both inc p&p!).

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Fig 1

Fig 2

Fig 3

Fig 4

Fig 5

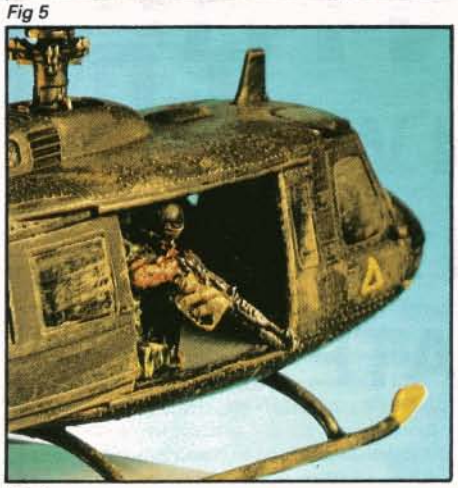

Fig 6

Fig 7

Photographs (Figs 1,2,3,4,5 & 6) by Joe Dever and Gary Chalk. Photograph (Fig 7) by Andy Whale, Steve Williams and Joe Dever. Vietnam figures, courtesy of Gary Kemp.

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Crash Course *is an alternate monthly department for* Car Wars *Enthusiasts, written by* Car Wars *creator, Steve Jackson.*

THE SCRAP PILE

This month I'm going to the spare parts bin . . . instead of one regular article, you get a grab-bag of notes, comments, and short subjects. Without further ado:

MILE MARKER 100,000

Sometime in October 1984, we shipped the 100,000th copy of *Car Wars*! Whoever gets it will find a surprise inside - a gold-foil-wrappped certificate (sound familiar)? entitling the holder to all sorts of goodies, including lifetime subscriptions to *Space Gamer* and ADQ. Should be interesting to see who gets it!

IMPROVING YOUR GARAGE

A few strips of double-sided tape on the edge of your gaming table make a great holder for counters. Actually, this will work just as well for *any* game using cardboard counters. (Thanks to Draper Kauffman.)

If your *Car Wars* helicopter counters irritate you by obscuring the units below then, you can cut them out with an artist's knife or razor blade and mount them on a square of acetate. Instant 3-D. (Thanks to Mike Davis.)

If you like the two-sided counters in *Car Wars Expansion 6,* you can get the same effect with your other counters by gluing each numbered car to its wrecked version. This cuts down on your total counter supply, but if you have a lot of counters anyway, you may want to do this, just so you can always find the right wreck instantly.

NEW AND UPCOMING

Car Wars Expansion 6 and *Convoy* are just out. *CWX6* is a counter set: 4 sheets' worth of counters (153 in total). It was inspired by the *AADA Vehicle Guide,* and has at least one counter for each vehicle in the Guide (including trikes and helicopters!) Unlike most earlier *Car Wars* counters, these are black-and-white rather than colour. They're intended to be coloured by the buyer, so you can set up colour-coordinated racing teams, cycle gangs, etc.

Convoy is a the long-promised *Car Wars* solo adventure; it uses the numbered-paragraph system all you *Fighting Fantasy* fans know and love. It's based on the adventure that appeared in the very first issue of *Autoduel Quarterly,* but lots of things have been changed and added. It'll challenge you until you learn the way, but the rewards are worth it.

Coming in 1985 is *Cars Wars Expansion 7* an "off-road" expansion, including a motorcross arena and rules for autoduellist deer-hunting in 2035.

Work progresses on *Autoduel,* the *Apple* II computer game based on *Car Wars.* It will be marketed by *Origin* Systems, the games-software company that did *Ultima* and will be out sometime in early 1985 (we hope). I've seen a preliminary version, and I think it will be worth the wait.

Adventure Systems, the company that does *PBM Illuminati,* has started development on a PBM version of *Car Wars.* It will not be up and running in the US until mid-1985, and I have no idea when or how it will be brought to the UK - but I'm sure we will work out something.

Finally, the big *SJ Games* role-playing release (*GURPS,* the Generic Universal Role Playing System), set for July 1985, will be followed in late 1985 by a supplement that covers the *Car Wars* world in *GURPS* terms.

EXPANDED POWER RULES

(*This material is adapted from the new solo adventure, Convoy. It allows a more detailed and realistic treatment of vehicles' power use - which can be* important in an open-road adventure, with a long time between recharges!) Each power plant recharge is good for 200 miles' worth of power, assuming you travel at normal speeds. However, this 200 "power units" can get you farther if you drive slowly, or vanish quickly if you fire your lasers or drive at high speed. Each vehicle record sheet should include a section where tally marks are kept to show that vehicle's power usage.

Travelling at very high speed uses up your power faster. Likewise, travelling at very low speeds uses up your power more slowly. A chart relating time and power consumption is given below under *Expanded Time.* Not every possible speed is listed, of course, but the useful ones are.

Every 10 miles, after recording the time and your power usage, you should set your convoy's speed for the next 10 miles, using one of the speeds on the *Elapsed Time* chart. If you are running a convoy, all vehicles must go on the speed; this will be your beginning speed in case of a road encounter.

As a rule, you should keep to 55 mph most of the time. Travelling slowly is only worthwhile if you need to stretch out the last few miles in your power plant; travelling at high speed can be dangerous and is not advisable unless you're pressed for time. Keep to 55 when you can, and avoid the bookeeping.

Laser fire also uses up your power. Each time you fire a laser, it uses 2 units of power. A heavy laser uses 3 units of power.

Recharges

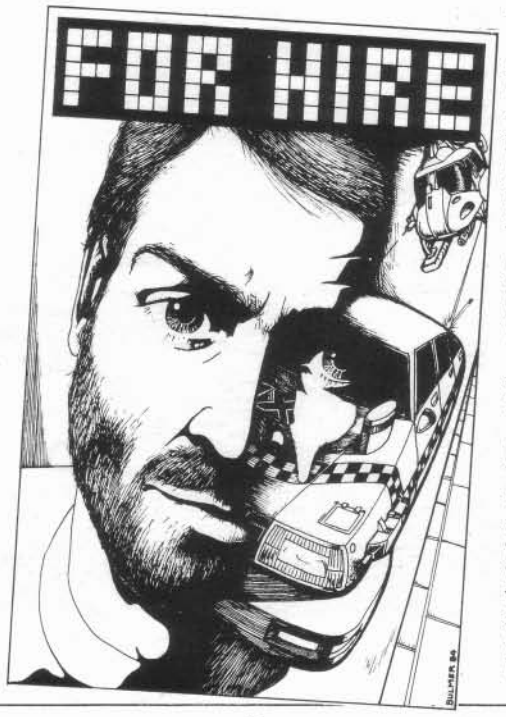
An ordinary truck stop can recharge 2 vehicles at once; this takes 10 minutes and costs $20 for a cycle, $50 for a regular vehicle, and $100 for a truck or bus. Recharge cost is the same, regardless of how many power units you had left when you got the recharge.

In an emergency, you can use your jumper cables to transfer power from one vehicle to another. However, this is far less efficient than recharging at a truck stop. It takes time . . . 5 minutes to stop and make the hookup, plus 1 minute for every unit of power transferred.

Elapsed Time

After every ten miles of travel, make a note of the elapsed time. You can then change your vehicle's speed if you need to. (It will make bookeeping horribly complex if you change average speed too often!) The time (rounded off for game purposes) required to travel 10 miles at different speeds is given below:

40 mph:	(energy-conserving speed): 15 minutes, 9 power units
55 mph:	(normal cruising speed): 11 minutes, 10 power units
60 mph:	10 minutes, 11 power units
70 mph:	9 minutes, 13 power units
80 mph:	8 minutes, 15 power units
90 mph:	7 minutes, 17 power units
100 mph:	6 minutes, 20 power units



TAKE THIS JOB AND SHOVE IT

The *Car Wars* world is rough . . . but some jobs would be *especially* bad news. Here are a few of the worst ones we could think of. Every one of these has the makings of a great scenario or three. One of these days, maybe I'll do some of them! In the meantime, take them yourselves and have fun.

Traffic magistrate; Repo man (vehicle repossessor); Insurance claims investigator or adjuster; Taxi driver; Air traffic controller; Travelling salesman; Wrecker operator; Duel promoter;

I'd be interested in hearing reader suggestions for other tough jobs of 2035.

ERRATUM

The "Double-Decker" Bus article in the November '84 issue referred to "white" and "shaded" squares, but the diagram was actually printed in shades of red. If you read "red" for white" in the description, it will all make sense. (I'm sure you all figured this out, but it was a great opportunity to plague the *WD* staff . . .)

Until next time - drive offensively! □

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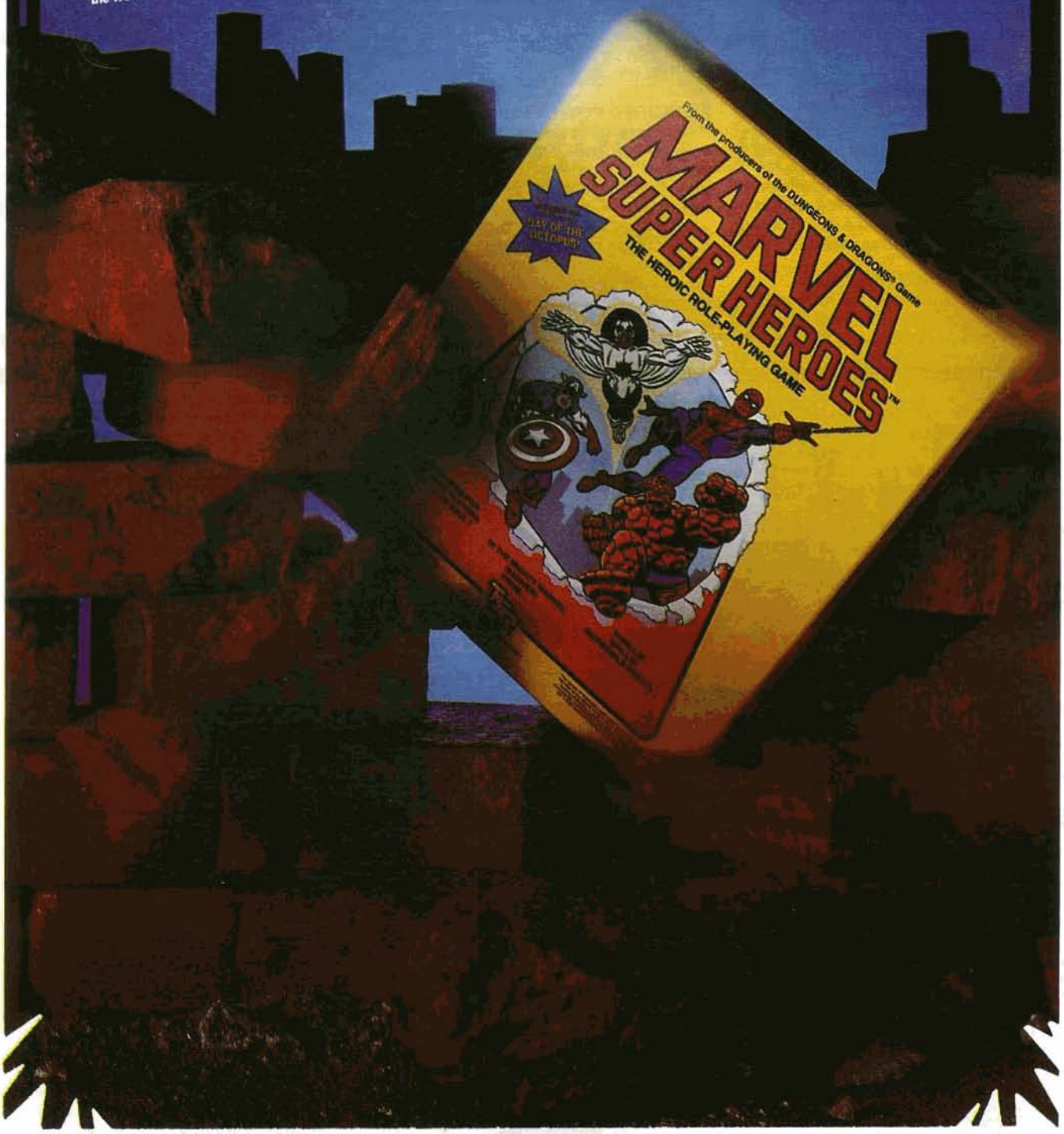

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Dear Dwarfsters,

For several years I have been reading *White Dwarf* and have seen many changes in format and style. However I believe that it is possibly at its peak at this time - more features which are much wider in their outlook than ever before, such as the cartoon strips and Dave Langford's excellent book reviews. (Why does he get such a hard time?)

So now, since you have made many additions and modifications over the past few months, why not add another which could reap fair benefits unto *White Dwarf* - a musical feature. It need only be small and bi-monthly, but it would be a breath of fresh air. Many reasons present themselves; firstly are not your average readers 15 years old and male? Such persons all tend to have an abiding interest in music, if not more. Music and role-playing do seem to go strangely together, with bands taking their influences from RPGs - did not Jo Callis of the Human League wear a *Judge Dredd* T-shirt on 'Top of the Pops', did not the late *Dragonlords* (RIP) have such a feature in its later life? A strangely large proportion of role-players are also music-lovers, so why not start a musical feature?

May the Curse of Uri Geller never strike the Citadel,

Yours,

Stephen Gardner, Cheltenham.

Did not the Editor's heart miss a beat over the idea! -Ed.

Dear *WD*,

I must must heartily agree with B P Stevens and Alan Steel (*WD55* and *57* respectively) in their comments about *Fiend Factory, The Travellers* and *Lew's Views*. Although Lewis Pulsipher has written some meritorious articles in his time, I hardly think that he warrants his own column, and while *Fiend Factory* was a joy to behold in its younger days, it stagnates more markedly with every issue. Why not discontinue both of these as regular columns, and use the space for some more imaginative and generally useful articles. Another *Letters* page would not go astray, nor would an increase in the space allowed for *Microview*. As for the humour of *The Travellers*, what little there is is about as subtle as a brick in the face! My other bone of contention is with the beings who continually whine about the increasing coverage of *RuneQuest*. Altea the Enviable [*WD57*] suggests that the space used by 'this strange game' should be used for 'general discussions of fantasy and role-playing'. I assume this means that the space currently wasted on *AD&D* specific material will also be used for this purpose. *RuneQuest* is a popular game, and its following deserves just as much coverage from *WD* as anyone else!

Yours,

Bryn Pears, East Doncaster, Australia.

Dear *WD*,

For a long time *Open Box* has been one of your most useful departments but recently the standard of reviewing has fallen, leaving my friends and I with little choice but to ignore the comments made in the *Dwarf* and turn to *Different Worlds*. A notable example was the review of *MSPE* in issue *49* and now we have Phil Masters' views on *RingWorld* in issue *59*.

Many of his criticisms are valid but do not warrant the low marks. The faults that he singles out as the worst, those of conflicting basic skill percentages and lack of unarmed combat damages are bad mistakes but, in my opinion, are not beyond repair and certainly do not damage the game system badly enough to earn such low ratings. In the case of the *Ringworld* animals does Mr Masters want personality traits for bogworms?! These creatures have much more potential than your average orc and most of the monsters in the *Fiend Factory*. However, the most contentious point of the review is the 5 for presentation. Along with *Borderlands*, this is by far the best quality from *Chaosium* yet. Lisa A Free surpasses herself and there is a stunning cover by Ralph McQuarrie. If *Ringworld's* presentation is worth a 5 then that of *Call of Cthulhu* is not worth rating!

I was pleased that I bought this game and still am, but the hefty price combined with this review may put other people off. I apologise if this appears to be a personal attack on Mr Masters. That is not the way it is meant. He has earned my respect over the years with his excellent contributions. I just disagree with his opinion in this case.

Yours,

Mark Walton, Norton, Stoke-on-Trent

Dear *WD*,

You tell 'em, Carl! If all those wallies who wrote saying that *Thrud* was not witty and was too simple are not in homes for deficiency in sense of humour, here's a challenge: find a cartoon strip more hilarious than the *Thrud* in *WD55* (or for that matter, any other *WD*).

Secondly, I am writing about a well-worn but nevertheless ignored subject - the *Fiend Factory*. I find it ridiculously senseless to churn out monster after monster for a game that already has three books full of sword-fodder containing not far off 1000 additions. Why not have such an article for a game with a smaller selection?

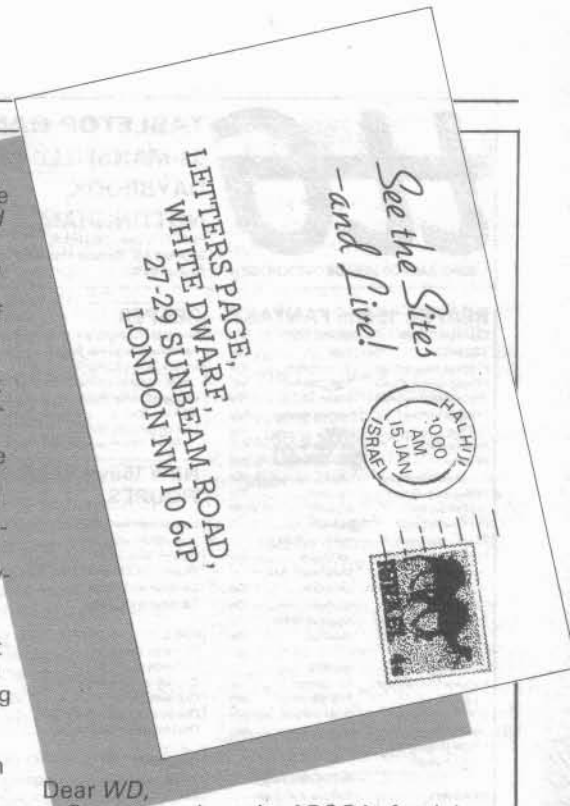
On the same subject, why is there so much *AD&D/D&D*? Although I play the game (and like it) I do play others and am rather fed up of seeing scenario after scenario, *Treasure Chest* (also rather pointless) and the previously mentioned *FF*. Especially at a time when many good and new games are appearing (*MERP, 007, Warhammer*, etc) I see such a waste of space pointless.

To end on a happy note I would like to congratulate you on *Open Box*. For the past five or *WDs* it has been superb. I have found it an excellent guide as to what to buy and what not to. However, it would be doubly useful if new games were to be reviewed before or just after they were published, not later on when most people have already bought the game or book!

Yours,

A J Lowery, Clayton-le-Woods.

Fiend Factory *is already scheduled for change, just stay tuned. -Ed.*



Dear *WD*,

So now we have it; *AD&D* in feudal Japan, sorry, the Nippon of *Bushido*. But where are the Samurai, Ronin, Yakuza, etc? What is the point of a scenario in a feudal Japanese setting when we have no details of the skills practiced by the adversaries? I suppose that we could always play the NPCs using the system employed in *Bushido*, but when we might as well play *Bushido*, full stop.

Does this letter sound to sarcastic? No, there is no way that it could be too sarcastic. From the time that the series on the Ninja was announced, I have been dreading the content of the final article. Whilst the general background information was enlightening for players of Japanese role-playing systems, I fail to see the rationale of this sub-class in the primarily medieval setting, normally emplyed in AD&D. The authors, themselves, stated that the use of Ninja in *RuneQuest* would require setting outside the normal *RuneQuest* lands, thus confirming the incompatibility of the sub-class.

I have been told by the editorial staff of *White Dwarf* that new character classes have no regular slot since the demise of *Character Conjuring*, which is true. At the same time the demise was attributed to the lack of interest in new classes, by the readers. I would draw everyone's attention to the results of *The Reader Strikes Back* as evidence to the contrary. As the three classes which have appeared in *White Dwarf* during that past two years (the Necromancer which have appeared in *White Dwarf* during that past two years (the Necromancer and Demonist, who are both solitary creatures and normally shun people, and the Ninja, a secretive character who would not wish anyone outside his clan to know his identity,) are all unplayable as regular characters in long term campaigns, I can only infer that there is a desire to make new classes an unpopular area for development.

In conclusion, take the suggestion of the readers and print character classes, but in future look for those which will be more compatible with the system.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Murawski, Birmingham.

ttG

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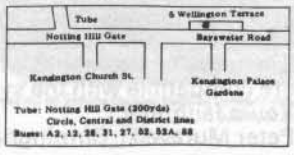

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Fasa Timelands
Fasa's continued expansion of *Star Trek* spin-offs for this year include no less than seven new products. Their major releases are the *Operation Armageddon Series*, three games *Federation and Klingons, Federation and Romulans* and *Romulans and Klingons*, ship battle wargames featuring communications and supply. *Triangle*, campaign system for *Star Trek* is planned for mid-year, together with *Federation and Empire*, detailing Federation, Klingon, Romulan and Gorn systems further adding to the background source material. They have also announced the imminent availability of *Stardate* a *Star Trek* mag, although I don't know any details. Another module *Outcasts* is planned, but again no details. Other than the *Star Trek* games they will release *Battledroids*, a robot combat game, which will include two 3" plastic robots. *Ral Partha* plan to bring out a series of figures to supplement the system. Following in their practice to release popular existing TV spin offs, they have secured the rights to produce a *Dr Who RPG*, the players are Timelords protecting the universe from the machinations of the Daleks, Cybermen etc. The game apparently concentrates on the problem solving aspects rather than shoot-em-up style. Supporting modules, play aids and figures are also in the pipeline. I've left the best until last, its subtitle is *Raid On Snake Mountain*, written for 8-12 year olds, simple, easy to read format, based on a cartoon series and bendy heroes and monsters .... it's *Masters of the Universe RPG* ... no comment.

A LOOK BACK AT '84
No one can say that 1984 proved to be a vintage year for the hobby; there were of course a few notable games that will no doubt continue long after the bulk have been thankfully forgotten. The high points of the year must include the eagerly awaited *Middle Earth Role Playing* game, which true to its *Rolemaster* parentage turned out to be worth waiting for; equally *Ringworld* and *Elfquest* lived up to expectation. What with the continuing proliferation of *D&D* modules and add-ons, the explosion of *Fighting Fantasy* style books (some bad imitations and a few of note), the arrival of *AD&D* bendy plastic monsters, and *D&D* cartoons on the *BBC*, one could have failed to notice some of the more tentative releases this year. *Avalon Hill's* entry onto the RPG scene brought us *Powers and Perils, Lords of Creation*, and *Heroes Magazine*, all of which have failed to attract even the most cursory glance. More importantly *AH* managed to obtain the rights to print *RuneQuest III*, the price of which now puts it beyond the reach of the gamers who made it so popular, indeed the hitherto expensive *Rolemaster* looks comparatively affordable.

The British revival continued apace with the long awaited *Golden Heroes* leaping on to the scene, very rapidly it has been accepted as the best Superhero game so far. *Games Workshop's* entry into the software market has signalled a new breed of computer games designed by and for people who expect a little more than most games have offered to date. Indeed this British drive and enthusiasm has convinced American companies to allow *Workshop* to print their games over here, *Call of Cthulhu*, and *Star Trek* last year; *MERP* and *Star Trek III Combat Simulator* so far announced for 1985. Even the *Lord of the Rings* figure license has been granted to a British company, *Citadel*, but more of them later. *Warhammer II* the much improved and expanded mass combat system has ironed out all the problems of its predecessor, and looked at with its forthcoming add-ons, *Warhammer: Roleplaying, Realms of Chaos* and several scenario packs should for the first time put a British RPG firmly in market.

The explosion of new games, supplements, scenarios and add-ons the range and choice is phenominal, certainly the larget selection at anytime. All this looks good for the future.

One can look forward to the trend emerging here in the UK of printing previously expensive American imports, *Call of Cthulhu*, and *Star Trek* this year, *MERP*, and *Star Trek III Starship Combat Game* so far announced for 1985.

On the miniatures front, despite the massive leaps in raw materials the prices have now stabilised, there are enough firms in business to make sure that the overall prices stay low. *Citadel* are about to release their 60mm plastic *Fighting Fantasy* figures; from what I've seen of them they're a lot better and cheaper than the *TSR* ones. Perhaps this means that 25mm armies in plastic are not that far away.

Taking a straw poll here at *GW, White Dwarf* asked three questions. What was the most disappointing RPG of 1984? By a bull neck, *Indiana Jones*, closely pursued by *Powers and Perils*, and *Other Suns*. The worst boardgame? *Quest for the Dungeonmaster*, with *Dragon Riders of Pern* fluttering second. The worst scenario or module, *Traveller Adventure 12: Secret of the Ancients*, loping into second *Glozal Est Authenique*, with *Jade Jaguar* and *MV1* (Magic viewer module) as also rans. I add no further comments on this!

In a year that brought us upwards of a dozen new products a month, the only really bad news was the deteriorating state of the pound, which inevitably pushed up the prices of imports somewhat. I think we can look forward to an interesting 1985, firstly for all the games that didn't quite make it here before Xmas, secondly for the masses of games planned so far, and thirdly for those we don't even know about yet!

AADA TO CHALLENGE BL ?
A recent consignment from *Steve Jackson Games* bound for *Games Workshop* was unexpectedly delayed by customs, the hold up was finally cleared up when they decided that the new *Car Wars Vehicle Recognition Guide*, which includes prices for mines, machine guns and rocket launchers, was in fact advertising material. Watch out Mini Metro!

TSR TO DROP BOARDGAMES ?
Rumour has it that *TSR* are about to drop their boardgames, including *Quest for the Dungeonmaster* and *Dungeon*. Also apparently under the axe are *Gangbusters* and *Boothill*, despite the fact that the latter has just been given a new box. It seems that they have already ceased production of these in the US, and when supplies run out over here they will be removed from *TSR* lists. This has not been confirmed as yet, but with the general opinion that *TSR* are getting out of the boardgame field, this does not bode well for the *TSR/SPI* titles such as *Air War*, the classic modern day aerial combat game, upon which *Starfleet Battles* and *Car Wars* owe much of their background.

NEXT ISSUE
Draw the Blinds on Yesterday - a *COC* scenario in modern day England.
Arms and the Man - vehicle combat in *Traveller*.
Dark Usurper III - last instalment of the *Fighting Fantasy* solo.
Eye of Newt - final part of our manufacturing magic items series in *AD&D*.
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GOBBLEDIGOOK by Bil

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Woking - Underwater? Primarily *AD&D* DM/player seeks new faces, must be able to role-play and be prepared for experimental material. No wallies. Phone Peter on: Woking (04862) 73747.

Help! 16 year old novice *AD&D* player seeks others in Ilfracombe & Barnstable area. Telephone: Ilfracombe 62493.

Wanted. Articles, scenarios or artwork for new fanzine, starting in January, free issue for printed work. Write to: Nick Edwards, Cherry Lea, Wells Road, Dundry, Bristol, Avon.

Gravesend. 18 year old player/GM trying to join club in Gravesend area. Plays *RQ, SO, Traveller, D&D* and others. Phone Pete on: Southfleet 3337.

Oxford. 2 14-year old RPers looking for other players in the Oxford area. We have *AD&D, Cthulhu* and *Star Frontiers*. Contact James on: Oxford 513723.

Frustrated. Small group of mixed experience *D&D* players who wish to meet experienced gamers in the Stratford area. Will consider other RPGs. Contact Steven on: (061) 865 9468.

Wanted. Modules *G1-3, D1-2* and *Q1* in good order. Also wanted is a copy of *Imagine* 2. Contact: Glyn Simpson, 3 Pool Drive, Bridgnorth, Shropshire WV16 5DL.

Swap. *Warlock, Battlecars* or *T&T* plus two dungeons for *Expert D&D* rulebook. Will sell all three for £14 ono, or separately. Tel: (01) 607 6309 after 7pm.

Announcement. Due to financial difficulites the *Hit Points* postal club has now officially closed. Those requiring refunds should write to the usual address.

West Wycombe. Players wanted for *AD&D, Traveller, Vietnam* etc. Assembly Rooms, Gatesgreen Road, West Wycombe. 6.45pm 10.45pm, second and fourth Mondays each month. Phone Norman on: (01) 462 6976.

Bolton. 10 year old player *D&D* seeks other players and DMs. Ring Matthew on: (0204) 32893 (after 4pm). Any response would make a keen adventurer very happy.

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RPG Telford. DM/Player, interested in all games seeks others in Telford area to try and form a club/group of gamers to meet regularly. Contact C Morris 51 Regent Street, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire. Tel: Telford 56538

Help! *Snakepipe Hollow RQ* adventurers urgently wanted. You name price. Contact Simon on: Bradford-on Avon 6386.

Northwood AD&D. A few places are now open for adult (20+) players in or near Northwood, Middx, who wish to play Sundays. Call Harry, Northwood 24743 (evenings).

Warrington. Small group seeks other players age 18+. Currently playing *AD&D*, will try others. Experience immaterial. Contact Derek on: 574731. (evenings/weekend).

Stevenage. *Battlegroup* now meet on Sundays at the St Nicholas Community Centre, Stevenage. Contact P Wheeler 11 Ely Close Stevenage. Tel: 69513.

Ahoy Anybody. Do any RPGer's in Harrow wish to further their contacts? A blighted group of three *AD&D* players (*TFT* & *Traveller* mechanics understood) of ages 16,17 & 18. Ring 427 1858, ask for James R Mackenzie, I am waiting.

Wanted. Another group of *D&D* levels 16-20 for scenario swapping etc. Contact: Lee (0757) 703870 (5.30 - 6.00)

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Wanted. Fantasy mags, figures and gems. Contact: T Charlton, 17 Point Road, Avening, Tetbury.

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Contact: Mike, Chesterfield 36906.

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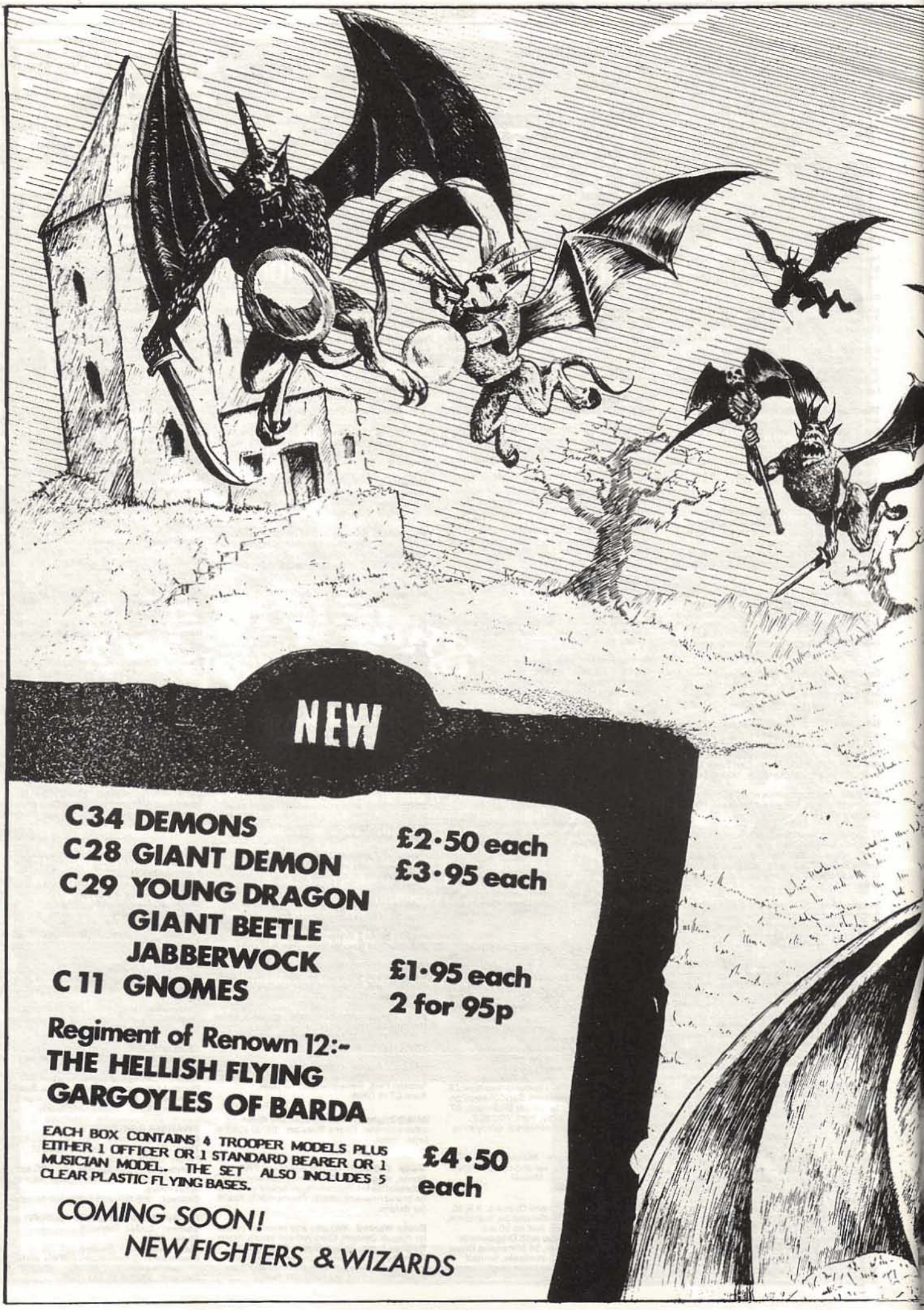
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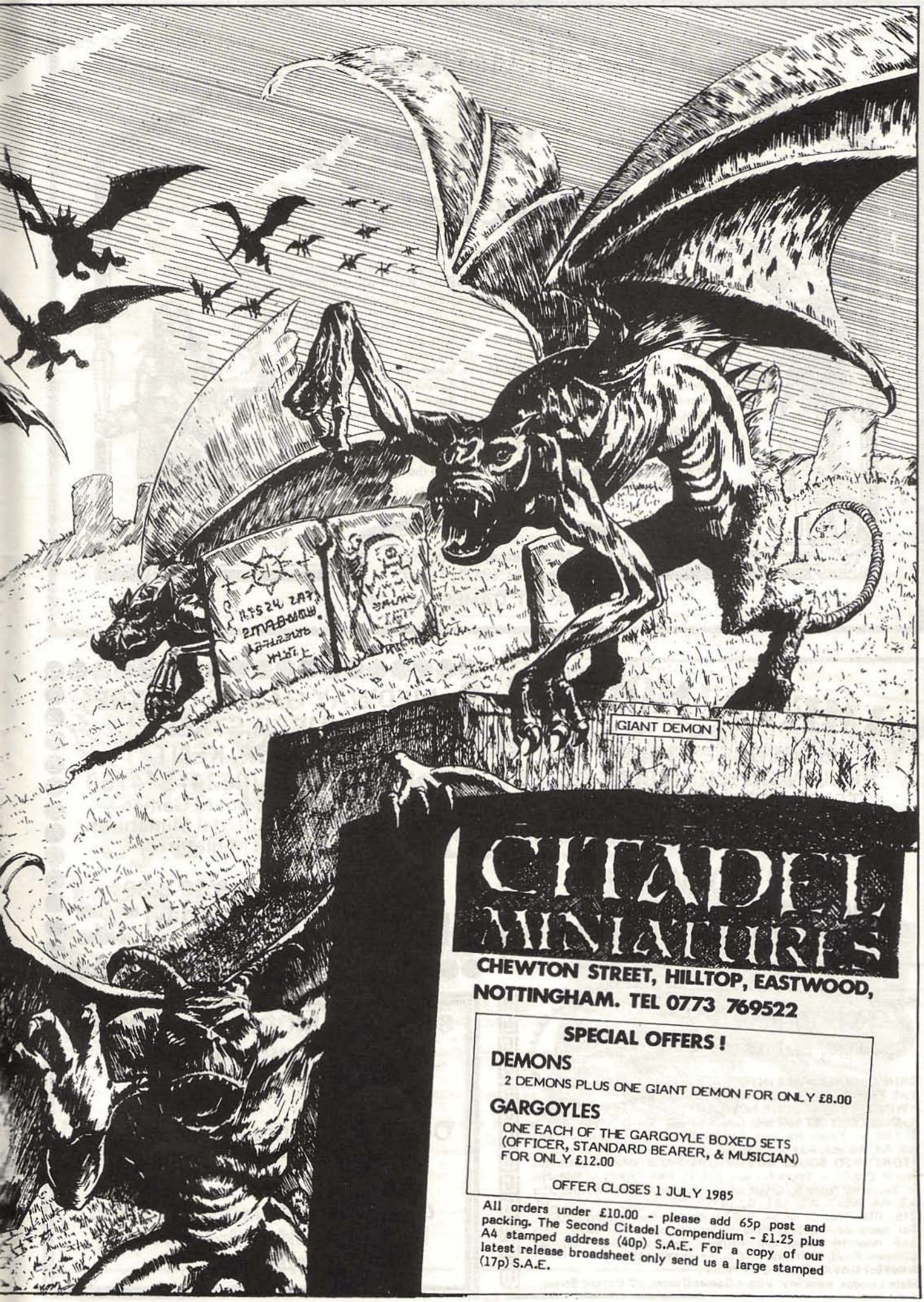
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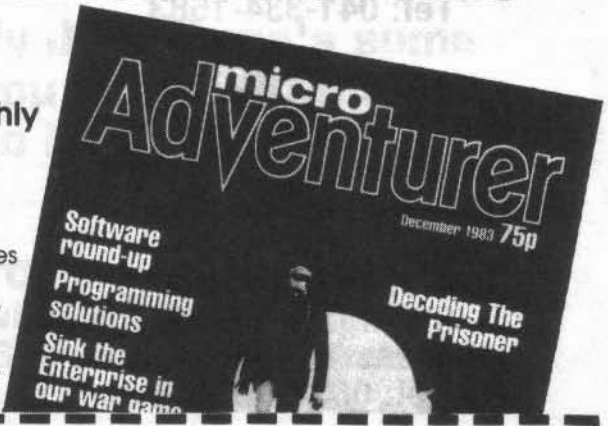

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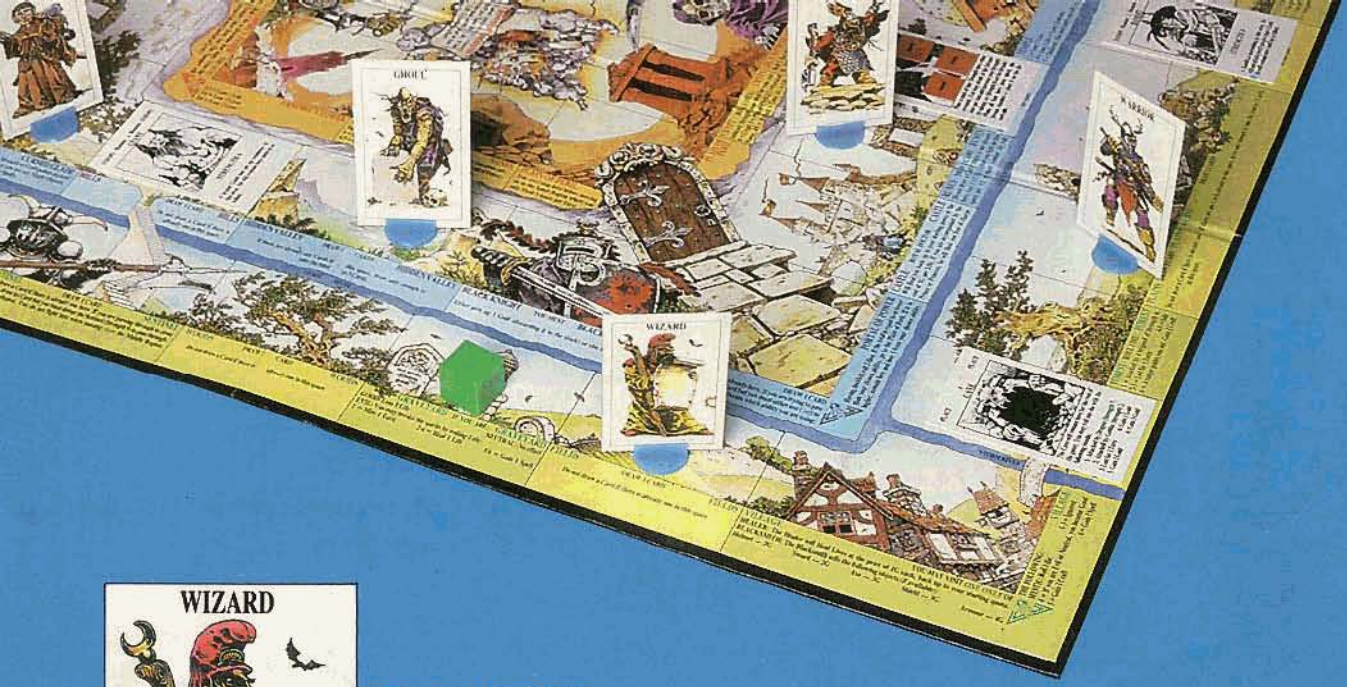

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